

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Althea Rose Leiloha Magno

Althea Magno was a Lahainaluna graduate born in 1965 and raised in Wailuku, Maui. The impact of Lahainaluna High School's boarding program as Althea describes it, was immense and greatly influenced her life's path. Throughout the interview, Althea details the enduring memories she has gained during her time at the school, specifically highlighting the sense of pride and hardwork that was instilled within her by the program, gaining lifelong friends along the way. Within her years at Lahainaluna, she worked at the cafe, garden, and other jobs. Some of her greatest takeaways were her roles within FFA, the Student Body President, and dorm officers. She eventually went on to graduate from UH Hilo, returning to Lahainaluna to recruit, teach and head the FFA program, then moving away to continue teaching. Althea holds these memories close to her, and credits many of her successes today to what she learned and experienced as a boarding student at Lahainaluna.



Althea Magno at the Lili'uokalani Gardens during her interview in Hilo on March 25, 2023.

INTERVIEW INDEX: Althea Rose Leiloha Magno

00:00:00 00:04:55: BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Birthplace, parents, family, places lived

00:04:55-00:09:51: MOTIVATION AND INITIAL FEELINGS

Transitioning to Lahainaluna, applying, having family at Lahainaluna, feelings away from home

00:09:51-00:13:08: JOBS ON CAMPUS

Working in the orchard, description of jobs, the garden, cafeteria duty

00:13:09-00:18:14: LIVING IN THE DORMS

Living situations, roommates, dynamics between girl boarders

00:18:15-00:20:48: WEEKENDS

Cafeteria duty, visiting aunty, going home on Holidays

00:20:49-00:31:45: EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

FFA, student body president, dorm counselors, classes, dating, chorus

00:31:45-00:33:25: DAVID MALO DAY

Performances, Hawaiiana club

00:33:26-00:37:55: DUTIES

Rubbish truck, dorm officers, dynamics between ages

00:37:55-00:39:02: THE L

Liming and lighting, access, the hike

00:39:03-00:49:18: TEACHING AND RECRUITING

Returning to Lahainaluna, traveling to recruit, history of Lahainaluna's ag, recruitment questions and answers, places travelled, being a dorm counselor

00:49:19-01:01:04: POST LAHAINALUNA

UH Hilo, meeting spouse, highlights from teaching, more recruitment, advising FFA, leaving Lahainaluna

01:01:04-01:06:08: TEACHING IN KEA'AU

Teaching in Kea'au, injury, Lahainaluna preparing Althea for current job

01:06:09-01:28:42: REFLECTIONS

Values, being Native Hawaiian at Lahainaluna, boarding program now, pride, boarder dress, taxis, community, affecting life trajectory

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Althea Magno (AM)

March 25, 2023

Hilo, Hawai'i

BY: Wailana Medeiros (WM) and Micah Mizukami (MM)

AM: Okay. All right.

WM: Okay. This is an oral history interview with Althea Magno. The time is 9:26, and I am. It is Saturday, March 25th, and I am Wailana Medeiros. Okay. So can you please state your full legal name?

AM: Althea Rose Leiloha Spenser is my maiden name married name is Magno.

WM: When and where were you born?

AM: I was born on May 28, 1965, in Wailuku, Maui.

WM: And who are your parents?

AM: My parents is Al Spenser from Maui. And my mom is Grace Lindsey Spenser from, originally from Kamuela.

WM: Oh, you're a Lindsey!

AM: Yes, I am.

WM: And a Spenser?

AM: Yeah!

WM: All these big families, yeah, okay, So. So I guess your ancestors on your father's side are all from Maui? Or?

AM: Some from here, some from Maui. We have a gap in the Spenser genealogy, so there's some disconnect there. My mom's 'ohana. All from Waimea, Kamuela. People use the terms interchangeably, but for the names, place names.

WM: How many siblings do you have? Do you have siblings?

AM: I'm the youngest of seven.

WM: Seven. All right. And then who are your siblings?

AM: My older sibling is Marshall. He passed away about six years ago. Then in order, my sister Mary Ann, my brother, Arthur. My sister Carol. Sister Aileen. Sister Sera. And then I'm the youngest.

WM: The youngest?

AM: Yes.

WM: Alrighty. And what are the places that you've lived?

AM: I've lived most of my life in Wailuku, and then college. I lived in Hilo Town, and I currently reside in Mountain View. Oh, wait. Let me backtrack. I also on Maui, specifically in Maui, Wailuku and up Makawao. Yeah. And then Hilo and Mountain View.

WM: And who's your spouse?

AM: My spouse is Eric Magno. He's born and raised Big Island boy.

WM: All right. And what is his occupation?

AM: He is an agriculture research technician for University of Hawaii, CTAHR, which is, you guys know what that is? College of Tropical AG and Human Resources.

WM: Yeah. Got it. Do you have children?

AM: No. Children. Alright. So where. . .

MM: Can we also ask about what your parents, or who your parents were and what did they do?

AM: Okay, so my dad was in the military. 22 years in the military. Then he retired to Maui, and then he worked as a receiving manager for Sears. My mom was a stay home, stay at home wife. She had seven children to raise, so she was a stay at home wife. Stay home mother.

MM: Did you. Did you know your grandparents?

AM: My grandparents. I knew on my dad's side. My grandma Spencer, Annie Spenser. She lived in Maui all her life. And on my mom's side, I only knew my grandpa, Kuakini Lindsey. He was a cowboy for Parker Ranch. Yeah.

WM: Where did you go to elementary school?

AM: I went to elementary school, Wailuku Elementary School. And then intermediate school. I went to Iao Intermediate School. I went to Baldwin High School for a year until I transferred to Lahainaluna.

WM: When or how did you decide to go to Lahainaluna?

AM: Okay, so let's see. Yeah. I'm the youngest of seven, obviously as shared, and every school I went to, I was always like so-and-so's sister. So your sister did that, your brother did this. So it's always like, was I going to play basketball like my sister Sera? Was I going to do track like my sister Aileen. It's always like what you're going to do. And I wanted to be my own person. And then so in like whatever year, 1989, 1990 was when there were talks about girl boarders being allowed into Lahainaluna, and I didn't apply the first year, but my cousins had gone the first year and my intent was to go the following year, the second year. But fortunate for me, two girls dropped out of the 22, so they pulled me in. I got to go in and Blanche from Hana, so I kind of not, not one of the first 22, but maybe 23. 24.

WM: Oh, okay.

AM: So it just turned out that the opportunity came and I got a phone call and said, "did you want to come now?" And I'm like, well, not I didn't get the phone call. My parents had the phone call and then they asked me, "Do you want to go now?" I'm like, Yeah!

WM: What was that transition like? Like leaving home?

AM: Um, it was kind of exciting a little bit because my cousin Kamaile was already a boarder there. I had a handful of cousins, Kamaile, her brother Kaipō, Kimokeo; they're from Ke'ānae, and my cousin Lance and Lawrence Stevens, who's from Kamuela, were already there. So I kind of was like, okay, I knew people there, other boarders I knew from Ke'ānae area. So, but the scary part was like there was a scary part. Like, do I really know what I'm getting into? Kind of? I won't know till I get there. But there was that excitement and I think because as I shared, I'm the youngest of seven, so I kind of want to be me. I want to be Althea, and I don't want to go to St. Anthony. There's another option to go to St. Anthony, did not want to go to a Catholic school. So I said, okay, let's you know, had to try it.

MM: Can I ask?

AM: Sure.

MM: Um, what did your cousins and your friends say about their experiences that kind of drew you in?

AM: Um, aside from the, the hard part, I think just the fact that for them it was something different. Coming from Ke‘anae and Hana area, there's not much to do, you know. And they said it was good fun. They probably did a non boarding time, but they did say, oh you got to wake up early in the morning, you got to do these chores. They talked about the food.

MM: And was there any recruiters that you interacted with or?

AM: I did not at that time. At that time there was not active recruiting. Um, a lot of it was, just, they could have gone. I don't know how boys got there, but I think for the girls I would say a lot of, of the first 22 boarders girl boarders had some connection to someone who had previously attended Lahainaluna. Like one of my classmates, Ivy Saruwatari from Lana‘i, her two brothers were there, so a lot of it was some kind of connection.

WM: Yeah, right. So kind of transitioning into boarding life, what were your initial thoughts when you got to campus?

AM: Okay. So I got, I remember I got there on a Sunday, and so there, I got my dorm key and ready to go. And I had a quick orientation of what to do and my cousin Kamaile says first thing in the morning you got to get up. So the first evening was kind of strange, I guess, because I was like, okay, I just kind of got here. I knew a handful of people, not a whole bunch. It's not like people just came to your dorm and said, Hi, welcome. You know, it just was like I was there. And then the first morning was just crazy with that bell going off that wakes you up, right? And you have to quickly get on your work clothes, your jeans, your shoes, your boots, and you go down to time clock, and I don't know if people shared with you, everybody had a number, right? So when you checked in, you would say your number, whatever your number was. I remember my last number was 109, so I'll always remember 109. So you check in and then you wait. And I was like, okay, I don't know what to do really. And then Chief Kukahiko, he was a farm manager. He came out and says, okay, you're going to work garden not hi, welcome. Whatever, you're going to work garden. Okay, grab your tool. I remember that. Grab your tool and you just follow everybody down to the garden. And so that was an experience, because it was kind of dark. And so I just kind of went with the flow. Someone that was really helpful for me when I was working in the garden area was Shane Saiki. He was an upperclassman, he was a senior, so he was really nice, helpful, kind of guiding me through what I needed to do. So the morning part took me a while. The first, the first week maybe. Then the bell rings and you have to pretty much run back to your dorm, right? Take a quick shower, put on your school clothes, then you have to get into the line and you walk from David Malo dorm through the parking lot to the cafeteria. But after a while you just get the hang of it because everybody's doing it. Everybody's doing it. Bathroom was crazy, right? Because you got 22 girls trying to get in the bathroom. So that was crazy. But then things just kind of flowed. I did have some friends that were day students, so that kind of helped me too, that they knew was coming. So as soon as I got there the first day, you know, they're looking for me. So that helped. It helped me because there are people there that I knew. And that was fortunate for me. A lot of boarders that come to Lahainaluna have no

connection at all with anybody. I was fortunate. I think things are aligned for me for a reason.

WM: Oh, yeah. Can we talk a little bit more about your duties? Like what was working in the orchard like? Was that your only job?

AM: Okay, so when I first there, it was the garden, and I would say the garden is the most strenuous, hot, exhausting job of anything in the boarding department. Well, maybe if you worked in poultry, if you had to kill chickens, because it's hot Lahaina sun, the dirt, that was exhausting. I share this story with people, so before PVC existed in a bountiful, right, there was this big pipe that came down to the garden. They had a tractor to plow. But then you had to make your gardening planting grow with the hoe and you had to go down with the hoe and level it, right? So that the water would flow. And if you didn't do it right an upper classman would come and mess it all up, you had to do it again. Yeah, but Shane would always help me. Shane Saiki would always help me. Right. So I always remember that, you know, because you had to go like, a long distance just to get it perfect. And so you had a whole line of boarders or lot students each, they had their own role to level it, so when the water turned on, it would flow down, yeah.

WM: And did you work in the garden the whole time?

AM: I did not. I only worked there for part of my first year and then I had cafe duty. Everybody has to do their cafe duty, cafe duty, you get to sleep in a little bit longer, but you have to work breakfasts, you work dinner, and you work weekends. So that was kind of a bummer if you were on for the weekend crew you would go in. Most of the cooking was done. Your job was to either put out the butter or cereal out on the tables. The syrup, help with the passing out of the food like a cafeteria line. Or you'd get the milk. Sometimes you had to go back and help with the dishwashing. Multiple things you did. Yeah, that was good because it wasn't hot, but it just took time. And I just say hot because time of year in Lahaina, right, is just like, exhausting. So and then after that, I worked in the dorm under Miss Lindsey as a supervisor, and our jobs in the dorm was to make sure the washroom was clean, make sure all the rubbish was taken out. I'll go down and mop, dust mop and wet mop the floors and in the common area, and take care of the grounds around immediate dorm area. I did that for half a year and then. And I was in the office. It was in office. And then I was also in the yard. So you're assigned the specific area in the yard. So I kind of had multiple, multiple things to do.

WM: And you kind of going back to it, you were talking about the dorm and cleaning up in the dorm. What were your living conditions like?

AM: Living conditions for me. Everything was very simple. You got into your room. There was one bed for you and your roommate. The built in desks, dressers on each side, a closet. And everybody had a foot locker. So when you go there, they give you a list of all the basic things you need. Right, besides your clothes. Right. They tell you sheets, bedspread, towels. I might have it in my memory book, if I can send it to you, a list of things that they tell you to bring. So everybody had a foot locker. Cool. Yeah. Like little

foot locker where you put everything else that didn't fit in your drawers and there was a desk, so each room had two beds, two desk, the built in dresser and built in closets.

WM: What was your roommate situation?

AM: My roommate was Patty Keahi. She was from Waimanalo. Yeah. Still good friends right now. We don't see each other, but we thank God for Facebook. Right.

WM: And were you with Patti for?

AM: I was with Patti for my first year, my 10th grade year. 22 girls downstairs. So girls were 22 downstairs, 30 boys upstairs. So there was a co-ed dorm. There was one male counselor downstairs, downstairs in the small room and the female counselor in the bigger room. So when Miss Mills was not on duty, it got crazy in the girls dorm because some of the boys would just walk through the hallway. So just upperclassmen just walk through the hallway. Right. We're just like, oh, no, you know, not to do anything, but just walk from one end of the hall to the other end. Right. So just come from downstairs, go to the hall, go out, and then Hoapili common area and the boys live upstairs. My junior year we went upstairs, so 30 girls upstairs and 22 boys downstairs. It was strange.

WM: And was it always like that?

AM: No, it was there from, so, 1982 was when we went upstairs. Well, '81, '82, '83. All the way until when Haunani, class of '94. So back four years. Then they changed. Hoapili dorm to all girls dorm. And that's when I first went there. So would have been 1990 because I it went to that when I started teaching at Lahainaluna. So Hoapili dorm became an all girls dorm.

WM: And then David Malo was the?

AM: All boys dorm.

MM: Since it was like a coed dorm, and like boys weren't allowed to pass through.

AM: And girls weren't allowed to go upstairs.

MM: Were there any other rules regarding the boys and girls to keep them separated or?

AM: Well, just. You're not supposed to be on each other's floor, yeah. That was a bottom line, girls stay on girls floor and boys stay on boys floor. But yeah, my first year there was just one particular upperclassman, Russell. He was kind of scary. There were some scary upperclassmen, seniors, right. But their bark is worse than their bite. You know what I mean, but just they project this lack of a proper word, meanness. But I know it's not really mean, but just kind of like, like I'm in charge. I'm just a walk through this hall. I don't care. Miss Mills is not here.

MM: And since you didn't have girl upperclassmen, since you were in that like first class--.

AM: There was Shavonn Eason she was a senior, and there was four juniors. There was Sissy Frame, but she's married now Latham. Malia Kawaiaea, Momi Silva and Monica I going blank with Monica's last name. She didn't come back that's why.

WM: How was that relationship between the kind of younger girls in the dorm to the older ones?

AM: I think it was good. There were just 22 of us. For me, it was good for me I didn't have any problems once I got accustomed and acclimated to what was happening. Shavonn Eason was the sweetest person ever. Unfortunately, she did not graduate from Lahainaluna.

WM: Um. How was it like when the girls first started coming? Was there any tensions between the boys and girls?

AM: I wasn't there initially, Remember? I said I wasn't one of the first 22. I was like 23, 24, so that I can't share with you. But when I got there, everything was okay. I mean, to me, it was, you know, you know, me and Blanche were like, the new girls for a while.

WM: So kind of going into what you did on the weekends, because I know you talked about working in the cafeteria was kind of on the weekends.

AM: Yeah. Because you if you were assigned the weekend cafeteria. So not all the cafeteria workers worked on the weekend. It was like every other weekend. So when I wasn't working in that one weekend. I had family in Lahaina, so I was fortunate enough to go to my Auntie Darlene Archangel's house if I wanted to. Same 'Ohana as Kamaile. Right. So we would walk down because we didn't have a car. You'd walk down and or, you know, sometimes people felt pity for you, so they would pick you up if you knew them, right? Because boarders walked down the hill. So I would do that. And sometimes, as crazy as it sounds, sometimes we would just walk back and forth on Front Street because you didn't want to be at the dorm. Right. Sometimes if we were able to catch a ride, we'd go down to the beaches, but a lot of it was just spent in Lahaina town, cruising and walking around, you know, go to my aunty's house, eat some kaukau. You know, sometimes they'll take us to the beach or sometimes we kids were just, like, hanging out at the dorm sometimes.

WM: How was it like to come home after being at Lahainaluna, during holidays and stuff?

AM: So you had once one weekend a month back then, so you'd put in a request for one weekend per month and I think when I got home it was sleep most of all, and then connect with my friends that were from what we call the other side, but from Wailuku and Kahului and just spend time with my family. We have family dinner because I was home and then my mom would always send me back on Sunday with rice, chicken, salad, just food to share with whomever and any type of snacks or whatever that they would buy for me because they didn't have a refrigerator like the normal kind. You know like the

one the milk is in, those big silver. Right. Okay. That was our refrigerator. And you never want to put too much stuff in there because it was like people would just eat it. So it's always nonperishable things that you could just have in your room. So you couldn't have a hot, hot plate and you couldn't have a rice cooker, you couldn't have all those things.

WM: So I would Kamaile's family be your sponsor, was that your sponsor?

AM: No, Kamaile is actually from, I didn't need a sponsor because I was from Maui.

WM: Oh, right that's, okay.

AM: Yeah. Kamaile's 'ohana, she's actually from Ke'anae. We're related on the Lincoln side of the family, and one of our Aunties lived in Lahaina town.

WM: So what were your extra curriculums? What extracurriculars were you involved in?

AM: I was a strong and proud member of FFA, Future Farmers of America, and I fortunate that I joined that organization. Ted Kawamura, known as Boss, right. He took a lot of us girl boarders under his wing and we joined it. And I became a AG teacher because of what I learned from him. So a lot of it was spent as far as school related extracurricular was FFA. I was also in student government, so different committees whether it was a social committee or a activities committee or assembly pep, whatever, and my senior year I was student body president.

WM: How was that? Can you talk about that?

AM: Oh, that was awesome. That was awesome. I actually ran against a boy Joruel Seatriz and the agreement was whoever didn't win as student body president would be the senior class officer.

WM: So since you got student body president—

AM: He became the class officer.

WM: What were some of your duties as student body president?

AM: Oh, God. In particular, I opened up all assemblies at the school. I got in trouble from Frank Martin, who was an auto shop teacher and advisory board member for chewing gum, I didn't realize that I was chewing gum and I was talking, so I got scolded for that. Yeah. And just plan. Plan with other officers on activities. Kinda take the lead on things when it came to things in the community. Yeah, I was the representative, student representative for Lahainaluna at that time, along with other student leaders, to go to a particularly Ka'anapali Beach hotel, which now I believe has a, well they had a partnership with Lahainaluna at that time.

WM: How did you balance boarding life and those kinds of responsibilities?

AM: Okay, so boarding life is very structured. So basically you wake up in the morning, you do the farm chores, you go to school like a normal student. So during the school days when I can do all my student government things and FFA and then after school you go on the school farm, you do what you have to do. And then from 4:00 till study hall is when you had time to do other things and then you had study hall 2 hours a night. It took some time. I think the homework part was hard because you're tired. Some days you're just exhausted and then you're in study hall. So you have to stay, stay at your desk, right? And sometimes you just fall asleep right on your desk and knock on the door, wake up! Not supposed to sleep during study hall.

WM: They had um, did they have windows?

AM: They had. You couldn't cover it. And if you were, so you could study in your room or you could go to David Malo had, there was a library above David Malo dorm. So if you're going to study in that little library you had to put a note that where you're studying or if you're going to study in the Hoapili small library, you know, put a note on your door and there's a clip and you write a note of where you are. So everybody knows where you are.

WM: Everybody would know.

AM: Yeah, mostly the dorm counselors, I guess, when they're patrolling.

WM: Who were your first dorm counselors?

AM: My first dorm counselor was Donna Mills. First she was Donna Domingo. Now she's Donna Mills. That same year, for she was for the girls specific for the women. But we had Dennis Diaz. He was a dorm counselor. He was also from a boarder. Interesting that he was also a dorm counselor. And then Mr. Naka– Nakamura, I think his first name was Mark. That was my freshman year. My soph, like, no, it was my sophomore year. My junior year was when they hired two female counselors. I guess they realized one wasn't enough. And Miss Mills didn't come back that year. Oh, no, she did come back. Miss Mills came back with Jan Omura. Yeah. And I can't remember who, Lance Nanod. I can't remember the other. And then there were two women and two men. And then my senior year was Jan Omura and Charlu Westerlin.

WM: Kind of backtracking a little bit.

AM: Sure.

WM: We were talking about classwork and homework. What were your classes like?

AM: Um, just like if you were in just regular public school. So you had the English, the history, the math, the science, electives. Yeah. They had and they had a class called Resource, which at that time a lot of boarders took it because you didn't have to do

anything in there and you could put your head down and sleep. Was eight classes, so I had all the core, I had AG yeah. And I took typing some point in time in my career. Yeah. But it's just balancing out your work.

WM: Can you talk a little bit more about what you did in FFA?

AM: Oh, FFA is like the best thing ever in the world. I'm sorry. I'm just like, so proud of FFA, you know, FFA. So when I first joined FFA, if you're not familiar, there's competitions that you compete in, right? So there's. So FFA is you have the chapter level, state level and national level. So there's like half a million people in the United States that belong to FFA. But now they referred, it was Future Farmers of America, but now they say FFA, because they, FFA is more than farming, is pretty much a leadership organization. So FFA, we did a lot of, we practiced public speaking, we practice things like vegetable grading, parliamentary procedure. You learn how to make corsages and things, and once you perfected that, then you were selected to represent your chapter and compete at the district level if you won the district you got to the state. So the first contest I entered was the Creed. It's a five paragraph, about what FFA stands for. So basically, you recite it and you recite in front of the judge. So I won the, district second place at the States, which is fine. And then I also entered chapter records. So I was the Treasurer at that time. So you just keep track of the, there's a booklet that you filled out with pencil, a pen, because you know no more, computers or things like that, you fill it all out and chapter records, chapter record consisted of the Treasures book, the Secretary's minutes and a scrapbook. And a scrapbook was a collection of things that the FFA chapter did, and you just send it to the judges. And they did that. I did parliamentary procedure. And so basically you run a meeting, so there's a chair and you practice like they give you like a motion and there's a five member team and then you just, you, you, you actually you're demonstrating, but you kind of have a script ahead of time. So you know what each one's going to kind of say based on that motion. Yeah.

WM: Was there mostly boarders in FFA?

AM: It was a combination. I joined FFA my junior year. I joined because everybody wore their FFA jackets. All right. Blue corduroy jacket, right. With your name on top over here, big emblem on the back with Lahainaluna FFA chapter. And it was like, Oh my God, look at that. FFA was THE club. So that's why I, I joined. Yeah. And boarders but was mostly day students.

WM: What was the relationship between boarders and day students?

AM: It varied. Like I said, I was fortunate that I had friends there already and I had a cousin. So you know how when you live on an island, everybody's connected to somebody, right? So I was fortunate that I had people ahead. So I personally didn't have any issues with day students. But I do know that some of the other girl boarders had issues. Because now they were like, how can I say it, before day student girls would date boarder boys, prior to girls going to Lahainaluna. Now you had 22 boarder girls that lived on the campus, so I heard that when they first came there was some issues between a handful of

girls and a handful of other, well, girls day students and boarders that dealt with boys. Are you surprised? (Laughter).

WM: So, speaking of dating, what was dating life like?

AM: I actually dated boarder boy for a long time in high school and out of high school. It was. I don't know. Now I think back is like, wow, that's a bit much because you're living with them, right? You don't think about it at the time, I mean, before now. Right, afterwards, when I became a teacher there, I just thought like, boy, that's like a bit much. When I see boarder girls and boarder boys dating, I think, that was like me back then! You know what I mean? You don't think about it, right? Yeah, we hung out. during our breaks, hang out, watch TV or whatever, you know what I mean. Nice enough. One good thing about it is that, when I came out of my dorm, he was there to walk me to my class, you know? But now I think back like woah we spent a lot of time together.

WM: Was that common for boarder girls to date boarder boys?

AM: There were. There were a handful of them. Yeah. Some of them ended up getting married.

WM: Oh, wow.

AM: And having children together.

WM: Connections are strong, yeah because of the boarding program.

AM: Yeah. Yeah. Well, again, you live on campus. That's what I think, you know. And I just think back, like. Oh.

WM: Can you talk a little bit about boarders chorus?

AM: Boarders chorus, every Sunday night. Yeah. Yeah. Lori Gomez.

AM: So you sat in your different areas based on where you sang and you would learn different songs and that was a good, that was good for, I think, everybody to learn songs. But she was a crack up Miss Gomez. She would stand up and I mean, she's kind of short with her hand and movement, you know, and stuff. And yeah, if people weren't singing she just zeroed you, was mostly boys in the back, not paying attention. So most of the girls seemed to be in the front because they were like, Sopranos. But I actually liked it. Yeah, we performed at David Malo. You're familiar with David Malo event?

WM: Yeah. Can you talk a little bit about that?

AM: Yeah. David Malo so, David Malo Day is actually to honor one of the first boarders, David Malo. If you don't know, he's buried on top of Mount Ball. Yeah, up the L. It was

started by James Greig. Jimmy Craig. So he started the Boarders chorus and the Hawaiiana club. So its basically a performance to give back to the community. Yeah. So you sing different songs. I can't remember. That comes off the top of my mind right now. I don't know why.

WM: I remember. I think one of them was like beyond like, Yonder Lahaina Mountains or something.

AM: Oh, that's. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And then there were songs. I'm trying to think what we sang. It'll come to me by the end of the interview. I can rattle off all these songs.

WM: And you guys would do performances?

AM: We would do performances. We would go down to Ka'anapali, to the shopping center between Ka'anapali Beach, Whalers Village, and there was sometimes we'd go down to the Banyan Tree, sometimes it's the whole boarders chorus, sometimes a select few, depending on the event and what was happening. But most of it was preparation for David Malo Day.

WM: Were you in Hawaiiana club?

AM: I was not.

WM: You were not.

AM: In fact, all my years as a boarder, there were no girls in Hawaiiana club.

WM: Oh, interesting.

AM: I don't know why, but as years went by, more of the Hawaiiana Club when I was there as a teacher, a lot of Hawaiian club members were actually majority boarders.

WM: Kind of transitioning back to girl boarders and boy boarders and their different duties. Were the duties different?

AM: No they were all the same.

WM: They're all the same.

AM: They were all the same. The only one that I recall would drive the trucks were mostly boys. And surprisingly, this is this is funny. Okay. They didn't have rubbish pickup on weekends back then, right? So all the rubbish, they call them opala truck, would go in the truck and then drive all the way to Olowalu to dump it at the Olowalu dump and drive back until they had the things that come up, you know what I mean, with the those big containers. So they had to do opala run. But the jobs were to, to work opala, or you was like not an honor, but you was a good worker if you were selected, or responsible to be

part of, they call it utility. So you did rubbish, you did some irrigation, fix something that broke, cut trees. So yeah, small crew for opala. Most of the people worked in garden or yard, but if you worked in the dorm or the office because you're responsible, they put like, okay, you can do it. Because office, because you had to do mail. Sometimes they asked you to do inventory for them, so you had to be responsible, but yet you couldn't just like share everything that was happening.

WM: So girls would also work in like the swinery?

AM: Yes, that's one place I never worked. Livestock. Livestock. So they had pigs and had chickens. So if you work poultry, you would have to harvest eggs. And the eggs went up to the cafeteria. That would then be served.

WM: Were you ever a part of the, the officers in the boarding?

AM: I was yeah. My senior year I was a sergeant.

WM: Sergeant. Can you talk a little bit about that?

AM: It was just like a title, and you were allowed to give underclassmen over time. But it had, well anybody, over time but had to get approved. You're pretty much, I guess, the keepers of the girls making sure everything was on on task, making sure that, you know, like when it came time for clean dorm, so did anyone talk about clean dorm? So every night you had to clean dorm. Okay. So everybody was assigned an area you're assigned to sweep, or to mop, or to take out rubbish, or to clean the bathroom, whatever, to make sure everybody was doing what they were supposed to do during clean dorm. And every, every so often the first time I did this, I thought it was crazy. You had to hand wax the floor. There was no machine. You take out your old shirt or rag and a wax, and there's like, the hallway's small right. And you had to go down and hand wax.

WM: Every single night?

AM: No. When there was this occasion coming up, they want the floors to be sparkling clean. So when you became an officer, you have to do it but had to make sure it's done okay. And then we would have meetings with like Mary Helen, was the officer and she would tell us if there's anything we have to follow up on. And then every morning at breakfast, one of the officers, whether it be from the girls or the boys, would stand up if there's any announcements in the cafeteria.

WM: Oh, I see. What was your relationship like when you were an upperclassmen to the underclassmen girls?

AM: Oh. I don't think I was a mean person, but I probably got on their case because I know what mean is because I, you know, like like I said, there's some boys that were mean and scary. I don't think I was mean and scary. But yes I did get on some of them for. Yeah. Their area or they're supposed to be cleaning and they're hanging out talking or they're on

the phone when they're not supposed to be. Yeah, but for the most part, there is just only 30 of us.

WM: Did you feel any pressure from a girl upperclassmen when you were underclassman?

AM: No, it was a little bit different because there are less. Less of them. And they were all nice. Like I said, Shavonn was a senior. Super nice, Super nice. So Sissy, we have. She's kind of like my hanai cousin. But yeah, every time I go back to Maui, the first two people I text or get a hold of is Sissy and Kamaile. Malia, and Momi were also juniors. Yeah, they're all, everybody was nice.

WM: Do you have any core, I guess, memories or main takeaways from your boarding experience at Lahainaluna?

AM: I think something that will always be special to me and I don't think I could do it today was being able to go up to the L. So the hike, the trek up to the L is exhausting, right? Because it's a hill and you have to carry tools or whatever, and then you lime the L. But once you get, when you're done and you're at the top, it's just a feeling of pride. Yeah, I've done it twice as a student, so two, four, five times as a student. Then when I went back to teach, I would go up at least once a year with the boarders when they went up, and at the time you don't have to carry anything you just like go up.

WM: Yeah.

AM: But for me, I would think being able, because not anybody can go up there maybe now because they don't have Pioneer Mill so anybody can go. But back then there was like a gate so you couldn't go. And I just think, that I would take away. And then most importantly, just the friendships over the years, friendships as this boarder student and then the connections I continue to have with my former students. Like Haunani and Amber's class. So they must have come in '91. So '91, '92, '93, '91. So they came in school year 1991. So the first students I ever taught at Lahainaluna as a teacher, and to this day that is my favorite of all classes. It is. I mean, there's other students in other classes that I'm still in contact with, but those girls particularly proud, probably because we were both started there in roles of me, teacher and Boarder at the same time, I feel.

WM: Do you think what you learned is the boarder better prepared you to teach?

AM: Definitely, definitely, definitely. And to understand where kids are coming from, you know, when you're a boarder, you don't really as a as a boarder, you don't really know what people's lives are like. And me, you just, you know, Oh, yeah, he's from here. He's from there. Or he got kicked out or he left or whatever. But when you become when you're in the opposite side and you're a teacher, I was on the advisory board. Then you find out more about specific boarders. So one of my jobs, besides being an AG teacher, was to go out and recruit. So Lahainaluna, so let me backtrack a little. Lahainaluna was an agricultural learning center. So in the state of Hawaii, certain schools were designated as learning centers that got extra funding from the legislature because they specialized.

So Lahainaluna was agriculture, Hilo High was performing arts. I believe Castle High might have been performing arts. I think Leilehua was AG. Anyway, you get this extra funding. So the purpose of the learning center is kids from any place can come to your school because you have something they don't. So the boarding department, along with the learning center, came up with a way to get more kids into agriculture and boarding. So I would go out. This island. Because since my husband's from here, we had a place. I had a place to stay, and I would go around the entire island to different schools based on appointments and interview kids. So kids would send in their application. And this big old thing before computers, right. And the school would make appointments and you'd interview kids one at a time and there's a ranking sheet and then you could write comments and your recommendation if they should come or shouldn't come. Yeah.

WM: And what years was this?

AM: I did that all while I was teaching there. So I did that from 1990 until 1997. That stop along the way. After that, I don't know specifically why it stopped, and I think that's one of the reasons why the decline in kids, because kids don't know what they don't know. Well, now today's is social media. They know. But I spent a lot of time on the South side. Yeah. So Ka'u High School, Na'alehu, Ho'okena, Honaunau, kind of remote areas. A lot of kids, a lot of students came from those schools to Lahainaluna High School. I did Hilo side, not too much from Kona, Konawaena. And then and then Maui, they would have to come to Lahainaluna, even if you're from Hāna, you had to drive all the way from Hāna to Lahainaluna. Back then, you didn't think of it, but now I think. Why? Why didn't they they meet them halfway? Right. But they came because a lot of kids. A lot of kids from Hāna and Ke'anae that applied already had siblings at Lahainaluna.

MM: So when you were doing those recruitment kind of interviews, what kinds of qualities were you looking for in students?

AM: We're looking for students that were. That were well, based on what they wrote were responsible. Well. You read an essay and they tell you why they want to come to Lahainaluna. We looking for students that, number one, are responsible. They're good academically. They don't have to be the smart and brightest but academically their grades were average because of the restriction, their interest in agriculture. And most importantly, why? Why did they want to come? Why do you want to be a boarder?

WM: What were some popular answers as to why they wanted to be boarders?

AM: Some of them had said because kids from Ka'u, Na'alehu side, was because opportunity, because where they came from. Right. They didn't have sports. They didn't have extracurricular. Didn't have this. Some of it was because they want to learn to be responsible or, you know, like take care of themselves and be, you know, not dependent on anybody else. Some of it was because they had a sibling that was already there. Yeah. But a lot of it was either they were at a school that currently didn't have something they wanted to do or they wanted to be able to, like I said, be dependent, independent.

WM: So Lahainaluna, since it was very agriculture focused, is that why, they would go to more rural areas and recruit?

AM: Yeah. And if you put down that you wanted specifically there for their learning center was an advantage for you. But what they didn't realize is if you put it down, you have to be in a AG class. So you know, when they, when they were told that then they had to, you know, Yeah. Because it was dual purpose. You want to get boarders, you want to get kids into the learning center other than the current students.

WM: How did you end up back at Lahainaluna?

AM: After I got my AG degree, I came home and I was going to go for my masters, so I was working at the time. At by then I was going to be in college for myself. So right out of college, you can't pay college for yourself, right? So I was a long term sub at Lihikai school. And then Mr. Ariyoshi, who was my principal, called me and says, hey. When the dorm counselor was leaving. Cause she was having a baby, would I fill in, I said sure. So I went back to become a dorm counselor. And then that was rough, you were a boarder. And you see these things going wrong. But yet, at the same time, you understand why these things are happening. Right? So it was it was rough because you don't want to be their friend. You can't be their friend. And it was rough because the other dorm counselor with me was their friend. So I was like the mean person, which I don't mind being the mean person, but she was like, and she sweet and loving. But you can't. Yeah, it was hard. It was hard. It was hard to see what they're doing, understand why they're doing it. But you had to give them overtime because you did something that you shouldn't have. That was rough. Yeah. And after that, I just I was subbing at the same time because as a dorm counselor, you work from four in the, three in the afternoon, all night long, and your days are off. So then I subbed during the day and that's when I decided to go back and become an AG teacher. And I went to the education program and I was set to go teach at Pahoa High. And then Mr. Ariyoshi calls me again and says, oh, we have an opening. So I went in 1990 along with my my friend who was one year older than me, Keith Ideoka. He was a day student, '82 grad, I was '83 grad, we were both in FFA, we both studied AG at different schools and we both, he went to Mānoa, I went to Hilo, and then I ended up at Lahainaluna.

WM: So that whole time when you were at Lahainaluna, you were a dorm counselor too?

AM: For a short period of time. And then when I was a, that was, that would have been I think I graduated '87. So that would have been. I'm trying to think. Would have been '88. Spring of '88.

WM: Okay. And then that lasted until?

AM: The summer. So just for a semester, from January until, January '88, until the end of the school year. Because one of the dorm counselors was expecting a child and couldn't do that.

WM: How did you end up getting asked to do the recruitment?

AM: Boss, Ted Kawamura. When he tell you. When he tells you do something, you just say yes. So it's just me and Keith. Maybe because we were young, maybe we had the energy enough to go. So Keith would do Oahu. That's where he went to college. He lived on O'ahu, so he could navigate O'ahu traffic. I could have done it. But because he lived there while he was in college, as you folks know, could probably navigate better. And he would also go to Kaua'i and I would do Big Island and we would both do Maui. Nobody went to Lanai or Molokai, but yet we've gotten boarders from there.

WM: Where did you live in Maui?

AM: In Wailuku, Maui. Yeah.

MM: So you were just talking about how you got to be, like, the bad person when you were the dorm counselor?

AM: Yes.

MM: When you were a student, what was your relationships like with your dorm counselors?

AM: I think the dorm counselor I got along with the best would have been Jan, she got married. So I would say Omura, but it would be her. She was just happy go lucky. Of course she scolded people, but just her, people got overtime. But she didn't have that harsh voice that sometimes Ms. Domingo had. Yeah, but I think I think it was good. I think she was also young. You know what I mean, not really young, but. Yeah. But it was for me, it was good.

MM: And then. . .

AM: With the male counselors was not really because you don't really. . . I mean, you know?

MM: You also mentioned the, or actually. Can you talk about your, you talked about teaching and all of that, but what did you do straight out of Lahainaluna? Straight into law?

AM: Yes. After I graduated I went into AG at UH – Hilo.

MM: And why did you decide?

AM: Because we have to go to agricultural school. I mean, Manoa is the College of Tropical AG and Human Resource. It was more lab work. If you're looking for Lab and Farm, UH Hilo. And then again, affordability, UH Hilo is a lot more affordable than UH Manoa. Coming to UH Hilo on the Big Island. I have family, ohana on this island. O'ahu. I had an Auntie down in Kane'ohe, a little bit different.

WM: Is that where you met your, um. Your spouse?

AM: My spouse? I met him in Hilo. Not when I was in college. When I came back from teaching certification. Yeah. So while I was going to UHI Hilo, I was working for UH Manoa's Research. So they hired student help and I was working for Dr. Phil Ito as a student help. And that's where I, I met my husband. He was a ag technician.

WM: And you went back for your masters?

AM: I was going to go for my master's, but I ended up going straight into teaching.

WM: What were some highlights from your teaching experience?

AM: I think I think for me, going back to my alma mater and teaching, that was good and to teach along people that were my teachers, that were now all my peers. So Ted Kawamura, called him Boss. He's another one. His bark is worse than his bite. Yeah. A lot I taught with him. Mr. Kagawa, Mr. Sakado, Miss, Shinozuka, a lot of this just going back there and teaching. And then. And then just pride like, you're going to give back to a school that gave you so much.

WM: Was there a difference between teaching boarders and day students?

AM: No, because during the day there were just students. Yeah. Yeah. They're just like, you know, like when I was a student. So I was on the board, advisory board, and that's a board that looks at who gets in. And then, you have board meetings for kids that get too much overtime. So overtime is given if you're late to work or your bed is not made or you slept in, or you got caught drinking or smoking, you know, and then the panel sits. And student comes before just a bunch of scary looking people. I don't think I was scary looking. And then they tell you what happened and then you, they say whatever they say and you ask them questions. At the end of the meeting, the board decides if they stay or leave. And at the end of the year and you do the same thing. They have advisory board meetings at the end of the year for kids that got in trouble throughout and then decide if they stay or leave. So they stay. They get an invitation to come back. They leave. They get a letter that says that, yeah, they're not allowed to come back. So a lot of the original girls didn't come come back. Some chose to leave and some weren't allowed. Some got kicked out during the year. Like one girl, Laurie. She got kicked out. And I don't know really why they did that. For whatever reason, I think they they got in trouble for something and they went to the dorm and they just did the fire extinguisher all through the hallway.

WM: How was it when you were there? Was it more common for girls to get kicked out or boys?

AM: Mostly boys. Yeah. Some of the girls got kicked out.-Laurie, Blanche and Shavonn.

MM: I know you mentioned. . .

AM: Shavonn did a stupid thing. But she's just the sweetest. She just was, did something that wasn't. Yeah, I mean, it happened. She just got caught.

MM: Was there students from Kaua'i when you were there? Cause you mentioned the recruitment.

AM: It was, Laurie. Laurie, yeah, she was from Kaua'i. Ivy was from Lana'i. Who is from? Well, Momi Silva was from Big Island. I'm trying to go down, most were from Big Island, and Maui and a handful from O'ahu. So my roommate, Patty, was from O'ahu. Wendy Aken, whose sister is Baby Lei, believe she got a hold of her, Lei.

WM: Lei Aken.

AM: Yeah, yeah.

WM: Yeah, we're in contact with Lei Aken.

MM: Yeah. And, do you have more to add?

AM: No, I think Hāna, Ke'anae, central Maui, Big Island. One from Kaua'i and Lana'i.

MM: And then, um, when you were doing the recruitment. . .

AM: . . .Oh, O'ahu. Did I say O'ahu? Yeah.

MM: Yeah. So when you were doing recruitment side you and the other person you're in FFA with. . .

AM: Keith? Yeah.

MM: Keith did O'ahu and Kaua'i, right.

MM: Yeah. So how, where, where on Kaua'i would he be?

AM: I think he went to Kaua'i High School, or wait. Is it Kaua'i?

MM: Because we hardly hear about Kaua'i boarders.

AM: Yeah, there was when I was there, I'm trying to think if there were people from Kaua'i. I think for them there was a central location. I think they came to him.

MM: Okay. Yeah.

AM: Yeah. I have to go back and think if there was somebody from Kaua'i. When I was a teacher, there was people from the Marshall Islands.

WM: That's what we've been hearing, too.

AM: Yeah.

WM: I was also going to ask, um, what changes did you see from when you were a boarder and then going back as a teacher to the boarding program?

AM: What did I see? I think they had a little bit more freedom. I mean, yeah, the rules are still the rules as far as the structure, I say freedom, like there was more opportunities to go out on the weekends. It was like you could go home once a month. That was it. They had more opportunities when I saw. I would just say that, I think there was, there were opportunities for them as boarders. I think there are more opportunities for them as students. You know, over the years you have more more boarders that became an FFA. They were officers, you know what I mean? Like Haunani, you know Haunani yeah? She was a FFA officer and a state officer. You're going to interview Amber. She was a FFA officer. There are more opportunities and I say that not because the school provided more opportunities. I just think that now you have more girls. I think there was more of acceptance of girl boarders in general, and they just became students in the school and went out to do, do things.

WM: Did you hear any stories about it being hard for girls at first, or like you just said, acceptance? So, was there, kind of hard. . . people weren't getting accepted all that much when they first came?

AM: I think when the girls first came, I think it was just like, maybe acceptance And I think it was, you know, the whole thing. Patsy Mink, yeah? Opportunities for women, yeah. Or girls. But for the most part, it depends on what you were involved in, right? So if you're like, I was involved in AG in FFA, so you have your friendships there, right? I think for kids who don't have a connection to the school, it's probably harder for them.

WM: Were you involved in FFA in any capacity when you were a teacher?

AM: Yes, I was advisor.

WM: You were Advisor!

AM: And when I was UH Hilo, we started a collegiate club. Yeah. I mean FFA and Lahainaluna mean equally both important to me. They shaped me who I am today as a person and as an educator.

WM: Can you talk a little bit more about being an advisor in FFA?

AM: There is pressure. Yeah, there was pressure because Lahainaluna always won stuff. As students we won. Not first place, but you won. Even though, Boss, I call him Boss, he would say it's all about participation. Right? But you know he wanted to win. Yeah. And so Keith and I worked hard because we knew how much, we enjoyed that, we knew how

much it did for us as far as building, you know, leadership skill, communication. And so it was hard, but it was fun. Yeah, you do fun things. You get kids. A lot of boarders got involved because they want to do stuff too. Yeah, it was fun to compete, go to convention. We have cookouts, Christmas parties. Yeah, we do this new FFA members at Christmas, we do a 12 days of Christmas. If you're a first year FFA member, you had to be one of the 12 days and we did this thing. Yeah, but Lahainaluna in general, and because FFA, I think when I went back as a teacher and I'd like to recognize publicly if no one has yet, Art, what Art Fillazar, for all he did for the students at Lahainaluna as Student Activities Coordinator. When I'm back as a teacher, it was so fun to work with him. He always had activities going. He would do leadership camps for school leaders and it was everything he did was just his energy level. So no one did that yet. Kudos to Art Fillazar for all he did for Lahainaluna Boarders. If you ever had a chance to interview him.

WM: I am in contact with him.

AM: Yeah. I mean, even now he left. Even now, he'd always go back and help. Yeah. And he was able to make, again, about connections right. And make connection to people in the community and stuff. Yeah. And he, when I went back as a teacher, he and Lori Gomez were involved with Hawaiiana club and boarders chorus.

MM: Can you talk about your trajectory after leaving Lahaina?

WM: Oh, that was so sad when I left. That was a sad day. I left in 1997 because we couldn't afford to live in Lahaina, and so we bought a house upcountry and the commute was just crazy. But specifically, they built King Kekaulike High School. It was a hard decision. Do I stay or do I go? Do I drive the hour and 15 minutes to work? But then afternoon is longer because tourists. It was a hard decision to leave. But Mr. Ariyoshi, who had retired as a principal, he knew I was contemplating. And he's the one that told me to go. And yeah, so he told me to go. Not not leave. But he's he just he just says, you know, you're young yet, you know, you if you're going to look at a family, you know, can you see yourself for 30 years, you know what I mean. And kind of. He didn't tell me to go, but he kind of like made me look at, like okay, you know? Yeah, so sad.

WM: So where did you end up after?

AM: I ended up at King Kekaulike, I was living in Makawao. And so King Kekaulike was like, less than 10 minutes. I mean, easy, easy drive. No traffic, whatever. I still was involved with Lahainaluna, you know, like Katie Greer, who was a dorm counselor, became a friend of mine. So still go out and hang, hang with her. I went to a couple of the dances. And then I ended up on the Big Island in 2004. We moved back here because my mother in law wasn't doing well medically, and so there was nobody on the island. Our brothers all left, the girls were gone, so we weren't asked to go back. But my husband saw an opportunity to transfer to UH and so again had a conversation. We sat down and looked at it and family first no matter what. So we moved back to here. Unfortunately,

the year that we moved back, my father in law, the caregiver passed away, not my mother in law. So he wasn't taking care of himself. And we've been here since.

WM: And you work at?

AM: Kea'au High School.

WM: Kea'au High School. As?

AM: Registrar. I was the AG teacher at Lahainaluna, AG teacher at King Kekaulike, AG teacher at Kea'au. One afternoon AG teacher stays late, farmers job is never done. I was locking up my office, locking up the farm, and I tripped and I fell, braced my fall. So I didn't fall. Of course, the first thing you do, even though it's 5:00. Look, if anybody saw you and my knee was sore for a while, it bothered me and it bothered me. And then a couple weeks later, it was announced that Merle Okabe was going to retire. And because the state was changing to, a different student information system, that they were going to look for a new registrar now to train alongside her as a job and learn the new student information system. And that's why I say I feel fortunate in my life. I think those stars aligned and I applied and I got it.

WM: Do you miss AG sometimes?

AM: I don't miss the job as far as managing a school farm now, because as you get older, I'm not sort of that old, but as you get older, you don't have that physical energy that it takes. You're a farmer at the school. When it comes down to it, I don't miss that. I miss the connection with students and I miss the connection with students and FFA. That's what I miss. And every other ag teacher that's left AG, one of my friends who teaches at the middle school, taught AG at Pahoa and she misses the same too. She calls me Ms. because she came to Lahaina summer program, which I'll talk about a little bit. She goes, You know, Ms., I don't miss the farm. Oh, but I miss FFA. So I'm getting off track a little bit. So Lahainaluna Learning Center had a summer program where there were opportunity for any AG student in the state of Hawaii to come to Lahainaluna High School for a two week a summer bridge program, and in two weeks they'll learn a little bit about mechanics, a little bit about landscaping, a little bit to do a leadership building. And they would also do farming, a little bit of each.

WM: What would you do?

AM: And so I was part of the leadership component and I was also the dorm mother at the time. So yeah, so they all stayed in one, in one dorm. Again, girls upstairs, boys downstairs. But there weren't a lot, a lot of students that came and they're all students that were in FFA, potential FFA and some of them were Lahainaluna students.

WM: Do you think, this is kind of going back to your job now. But do you think Lahainaluna prepared you for the registrar work that you did?

AM: It did. I would say specifically working with Ted, Boss Kawamura. Yeah, because when he retired, I took over the learning center component. So that's when I learned about finances, budgets. How to do your expenditure plan. Of course I needed help, but, you know, that helped me. And then I went to King Kekaulike, teaching AG. And then all public high schools get federal funds with Carl Perkins funds. And so the lady who was doing that left and the principal asked me, would you approach it? You never tell a Principal no. You never tell a Principal no. You said, okay, yeah. And so I learned that. But I, I just feel fortunate that every school I worked with, I just had people that were willing to help you. You don't get that throughout the state of Hawaii. I just was fortunate that every place I worked, there were people that you could ask questions and openly willing to help.

WM: What are some values that you think Lahainaluna instilled in you?

AM: Resilience? Yeah. Be resilient. Being dependable. Being self-reliant. To just go and do you. No, no. Hold back. Just. You just got to go for it. Yeah, but just be resilient in everything that you do. Just keep persevering. Because when you're a boarder, you have to just keep going. It's hot, It's muggy. Oh, my God. You're getting, you know, or that one year when the big water came down. Yeah, there's a big, heavy rain and all this mud came down and through the parking lot, you know, and then the water system got contaminated. Yeah, they had to haul water for us to bathe. And then we went down to the, didn't they have the intermediate schools at that time. They just had to persevere. They had to keep that. Then as a teacher, there same thing happened, had a heavy rain and a lot of water came down specifically into raising fresh trout, freshwater trout, and all that got muddy water, water for bathing. So we had to, students jump on the big the big truck and take them down to the intermediate school shower, to the shower, you know, but you keep moving. It just, things just keep moving on.

WM: Kind of. I wanted to know a little bit more about native Hawaiian boarders. How many you think was the percentage ratios of the girls and boys?

AM: I couldn't say, because not everybody back then would recognize as native like now, right? I would say they were at least 50% combined. Combined at least 50%. And I say that because a lot of boarders came from Ke'anaie, Hāna, if you ever have the opportunity to go out there. You'll probably get like a whole slew of whether they're Kimokeos, Frame's, Ka'auamo's, Pahukoa's yeah, Carmichaels, they all came from that area. So, you know, most of them come from the Ka'auamo descendants. So I would say 50. I would say, at least 50, 50, 50% Native Hawaiian, 50% other ethnicity.

WM: Was that reflective of Lahainaluna in general or just the boarding program?

AM: I would say just the boarding program. Maybe now there's more Native Hawaiians, but when I was in school, there seemed to be more Filipinos. And I think I attribute that to the plantations. Yeah, working for Pioneer Mill. It's probably changed now because I think more people are identifying as native Hawaiians. Like when my nieces and nephews were going to school and they're filling out something at home on Maui, and my

sister was filling it out and they're asking their dad. Now what ethnicity should I put? I just jumped in. You just put Native Hawaiian. You don't put anything else. Why? Because you're going to have more opportunities if you put your Native Hawaiian and you write whatever you want, you not going to get opportunities. But that is true if you're a minority, whether you're native Hawaiian or now I believe if you're maybe I want to say Chinese, not specifically Japanese. I think there's more opportunities now. And I think because there's more people that realize in Hawaii as a whole, right, that there has to be a need to support Native Hawaiians, pursue whatever there is. I know there's a word for it. I can't come up what it is. But, but it started off with Punana Leo, right, the resurrection of the native Hawaiian language. And from there, it just kind of spiraled, spiraled into other other opportunities. Right. For native Hawaiians to advance because of all the. I'm getting off track, but I mean, because everything that was done to native Hawaiians prior to, you know, talked about the worse health crisis, the incarceration.

MM: Did you notice that change of consciousness around native Hawaiians being a student versus going back as a as a teacher?

AM: I see it more now as a teacher and just as a adult. In living in Hawaii, I see more people identifying as native Hawaiians. Like I'm mixed ethnicity, but I put everything as part Hawaiian, you know, because when you look at funding, look at funding, and they look at funding in the community. Right. You want to do that. And I like that more people that are of their Hawaiian ancestry are not just masters, but doctorates. They're going above and beyond. They're in key places in government. Oh, Shane Sinenci is East Maui councilman. He was a boarder. If you don't remember, I can text you these names, but yeah, that's what I mean, when I talk about people in you know what I mean, in roles, yeah.

WM: Would you say that some of the values that you learned at Lahainaluna kind of stemmed from Native Hawaiian values, or your idea of what native Hawaiian values are?

AM: I think initially from home.

WM: From home.

AM: From home. You know my dad was in the military. My mom was a stay at home mom. Right. So a lot of it was stemmed from home. And then I think my values as a native Hawaiian, I think as an adult, not coming out of Lahainaluna because you weren't thinking back then. I'm a proud native Hawaiian, Right? You're a proud graduate of Lahainaluna High School, right? Or you're a graduate? I think as an adult in my adult life. And that's why my evening class is 'ōlelo Hawai'i.

WM: Because I think about how the boarding program was, say, like 50% native Hawaiian. So you think that, do you think people brought those values that they learned at home in their own Hawaiian households to the boarding program?

AM: When I was a student there, no, but maybe as, as, I'm trying to think as a teacher, see, when I was the teacher there, I wasn't in the dorm per se. I would do be like a sub dorm counselor for one night if someone sick. But so I wouldn't sit in the dorm itself so that I can't really say. But I think most kids to me, unless they're in immersion school, if they're in a public high school, I don't think they openly identify or the values of Native Hawaiian unless it comes from home. I see a lot of the kids that go in immersion schools.

WM: I think Lahainaluna also has now an immersion program.

AM: Yes. Yeah. Yes.

WM: That's really cool.

AM: And I think as a whole, there has been a lot of controversies over the years. Yeah. Relating to lands. Yeah. Whether it be Mauna Kea or was it the windmill, windmills in Nanakuli. There's more people, and I think social media is also the drive, but sometimes social media is misinformed. So you can't always believe what's there. My niece is actually Makanalani Gomes. She's actually working on her master's degree, has something to do with indigenous women in general. She's here this weekend, but she's really she's there when there's something happening. She's out there. She did something on Oahu we were talking about. When you look at Native Hawaiian women that are kidnapped. You know what I mean or assaulted. Versus non. Non. Yeah.

WM: Um, what have you heard about the boarding program now?

AM: I've heard bad things. Unfortunately. I've heard that when I say bad things, I've heard that there's been some issues. That's one of the principals last year was removed. When I talk about issues, I think there was a harassment in the dorm. It went high and above and principal got removed. I think that there's always talks about closing the program. There's talks that kids that are currently boarders don't really take pride in the program and kind of hard to take pride or get involved because social media, I mean, you know, this is this is their life. Yeah. When I was in school, I just didn't know what that was. But what I've heard is that the kids don't really care as much as before. So the pride, yeah. The dorm is not holding the capacity of kids that it should. You know, it should be able to hold. Hopefully the dorm should be all girls, but they have their own rooms, I heard. Or seniors have their own rooms. So how can you have a connection or relationship with a student if you have your own you have your own room. And at one point they were talking about the boys couldn't come back because there was no adult supervision. So basically, I think it goes back to Leadership at Lahainaluna. I don't know how it is now or prior, so leadership, anybody involved that really didn't have a good handle on what was happening in the dorm. And I also think that when they went from dorm counselors who live there with the kids to dorm attendants, attendants are there for 8 hours and leave 8 hours. You can't get kids to be in a right place whether kids having an issue. You have a dorm counselor, get to talk to them. They're going to follow up the next day versus nobody there. I think, I think it's not a good it's not in a good place. But I heard there's a lot of people helping to get it back into a good place. I think it's going to take a village. I

think they have to actively recruit again at some face and time. I think they also need to get the community or former boarders involved, like ahead of time. Like when I hear about clean ups is too late for me to fly out. But if there were to, some way to set three days, right? So we're going to do it this day, this day, this day. If you can come and not do a campus cleanup, do a dorm cleanup. I went to David Malo Day in 2019, and I went to the celebration of life for Mr. Ariyoshi last year, I think. And both times I went up to the dorm with my friend Sissy, call her my buddy. We just, we go up even though we know we're going to see our memories. But we just look like this, weeds, around piles of rubbish. We just think like, oh, my God, where is the pride? I talk about pride in the dorm. How do you, you can't you, can't force the pride. They have to want to be there for a reason and to build pride. So I just think if they were able to give the dorm a facelift, look more appealing. Yeah. Paint the room some other color than that old institutional color. Right. Make it happy looking. To get modernizing things. I think that would help.

WM: Do you think working too kind of helped instill that pride to the jobs that you had?

AM: Oh, I think most definitely. I think I think it did. I think people took pride in their jobs. I think people took pride in the things that they were doing at the school. As a day student, if you were an athlete. Yeah. Oh yeah. I forgot about. A lot of boarders were also. Football, baseball, volleyball, soccer, etc.. Sports. Yeah.

WM: Did you play sports?

AM: I did not.

WM: But you're hardcore FFA.

AM: Hardcore FFA member. It was just hard. You work in the school farm for 2 hours like, Oh my God, I have to go to sports now. I know that's selfish of me, but I just like being in FFA. I like the leadership role instead of government. That was my thing. That was my thing.

WM: And, and that you think definitely shaped who you are?

AM: Definitely with the help of the people. Like you know, I credit Boss, Ted Kawamura, he passed some years ago. Yeah. Miss Sakamoto, she is my student activities coordinator. Mr. Ariyoshi, yeah. People there. Then as a teacher, me as a teacher, they're my former teachers. You know, they just so happy that you came back to your school and teach. You know, there. There is. I see in them pride that we came back to the school to teach. Yeah.

WM: So that pride is kind of genealogical. It gets passed down.

AM: Yeah. Yeah. In fact, when I was a teacher there, I took my students down to. No, backtrack, when I was a student there, I went down to the kindergarten. Kindergarten. And I read books to Ms. Kutsunai's class. She was an elementary school teacher. Her husband was Mr. Kutsunai. When I was a teacher, at Lahainaluna, I took kids down to

Ms. Kutsunai's class. I just thought that was interesting. And then when I was a teacher there, one girl says, I remember you came to talk to my class when I was in kindergarten. I don't remember. But she remembers, you know, can always bring you back to connections and people.

MM: And then at what point did you realize you wanted to become an AG teacher?

AM: When I was in high school, I was in AG and FFA and it just kind of. It just happened. I don't know. I just wanted to keep. I think I just want to keep going. I just gotta keep. Keep doing it. It was like automatic, I guess.

WM: So you would say you found your place?

AM: Yeah.

WM: Yeah. Lahainaluna helped you find your place?

AM: Most definitely. Yeah. Most definitely. Yeah. Did anybody tell you about how we got mail and the bank account?

MM: No, yeah. Can you tell us?

AM: Okay, so it probably changed. But when I was a boarder there, your mail from the office was taken to the mail room, which is in David Malo Dorm. And if you had mail, your name would be up that you had mail, you get your mail, and then you had a bank account that you could take money out of, right? So your family would send you money and you'd put it in this bank account and you had a little tracker to see how much money you wanted. And then on the weekends or before the weekend, you'd go to the bank to take money out so you could have money for the weekend. And then as a senior, it got really cool because they started selling us candy and potato chips so you could get money and buy potato chips or candy. Doesn't seem like much, but when you're a boarder you can't go to town and go shopping, that was a big deal. And they had candy and potato chips. But I don't know why they stopped doing that. But you would go get your mail and you would actually, besides having it in there, you would have a box. Everyone had a box, if there was mail or a message, you would look to see by your number, not your name, by your number. If you had mail and that was the dorm counselor's job. So when I was a dorm counselor for that 1988 short period of time. That was one of my jobs to do the mail. And the bank, of course, they don't do that anymore because kids have credit cards. Going to town was a big thing. You know, could go to town the weekend, you know, after you work on a Saturday and you walked down the hill or you catch a ride to go to the beach.

WM: Did you guys ever have Taxis?

AM: We need taxis to come up.

WM: To go up.

AM: And you would like you would meet at, then, it was a McDonald's which doesn't exist where it was and when I was a student, whoever was at McDonald's, that was like the meeting place. You call a taxi, however many people you could fit in, that taxi would go up, share, and do the fare, right? So you would do the taxi. But when you went downtown, you had to go in boarder dress, so you had to go in pants, a shirt, shoes for boys or a sandal that has to have a backstrap on it. And if people saw you in town, they knew you were a boarder because how we dressed in town. But we would go to my aunt's house and change, and then we go. But when you go back, you have to be in dress. And every morning when you went to the cafeteria. . . So I don't know how they do it now. We had to meet at David Malo dorm, walk to the parking lot and you go to the cafeteria, the dorm matron was there and literally you go past her. And if you have a pants, you have to show you have a belt, and you have if you're if your pants is like that, you have to lift it up to show you have a back strap or the boys have to show they have socks. They probably don't do that now.

WM: I don't know what the situation is now.

AM: I'm just thinking out loud. I don't know. I don't know if they have to go and do the whole, you know, stuff.

WM: So when you go downtown, everybody would know that you're a boarder.

AM: Yeah, because who's wearing long pants, right? Shirts. Well, you can wear dresses.

WM: But you think that's the reason people are like, oh, that's, that's a boarder. Let me go pick them up.

AM: Yeah. Yeah. No, no. When you walking up Lahainaluna road someone will pick you up.

WM: I see.

AM: Yeah.

WM: That's a common thing we've heard too.

AM: If you knew them. Yeah. If you didn't know, you're not too sure. You with somebody, definitely not by yourself, you wouldn't. I was never by myself. I would never go downtown by myself.

WM: Yeah, well, is there any maybe funny specific stories that you remember either in your boarding experience or as a teacher, or recruiter, just anything that maybe that comes to mind?

AM: What comes to mind, gosh there's so many. One thing that's funny that we did on weekends when I worked in the garden, because sometimes the upperclassmen wasn't there. We would, Brenda Pressley, but she's married now to Beau Kekewi. She would go out and pick all of these flowers and pretend she was like, like running for a pageant or something. And we just thought that was so hilarious that, Oh, I know something funny. We would, we would go to Lahaina downtown if Halloween was on a weekend on Front Street. That was fun. And we did something naughty. We threw well, I, I got involved with that. It was some day students, friends of ours. It was me and maybe Kamaile. And day students were throwing eggs at cars passing by, and they gave us an egg, and we threw it!

WM: So that was the day students influencing you guys.

AM: Yeah. They're our friends, yeah. So we go downtown. No, they do that. Oh the bus rides were long. When you went to the football games. But when you won the football game, the bus ride was fast.

WM: Because it was more fun when you come back, everybody is excited?

AM: Yeah, a lot of funny things were naughty things we did, I don't know if I want to share that at this point in time. Oh, something we did, Ivy showed us how to cook spam on an iron. So we couldn't have hot plates. So she had the iron between the two desk and plugged it in. She got spam cooked off an iron! Now that I think of it.

WM: Gotta do what you gotta do!

AM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. There's a lot, but. Yeah. As, as a teacher. Oh, God. Not funny things, just fun stuff. Fun stuff with boarders. I think, you know, hopefully you can talk to Miss Greer. You know, she just instilled in these girls, you know, just importance of being a woman, you know? And she really was, she really was a mom. Just the whole counseling thing. Yeah. You have a contact number already?

WM: Yeah. She. . . through Bobby Watson's daughter. Yeah. She is going to. She passed on her information to us. But if you also have connection. Yeah, that would be awesome.

AM: Yeah.

WM: For us too, because we're looking to talk to them too.

AM: And you got to get Lei Aken.

WM: Mhm.

AM: Lei Aken is like, how can I say that? Besides being the four year boarder, she was the first girl boarder to be president. Like the boarder president. I believe she was the first one. She went on, same path, both went to AG, went to education. She's FFA state

officer. She's just a wonderful person. You know, I value her friendship. I'm not a AG teacher anymore. I was a AG teacher.

WM: Do you think Lahainaluna, for boarders, specifically influenced their careers in agriculture?

AM: To some degree. Probably. To some degree, probably. AG and FFA. Yeah

WM: Do you have any last things you would like to say about Lahainaluna?

AM: Oh, I would just like to say that I'm thankful for the opportunity to go to Lahainaluna as a student and to teach there and everything I gained from knowledge, values, friendships, everything. And I just hope that the future of Lahainaluna, yeah, is still there for more people to go. And I hope that the powers that be will do what they can to keep that program opening. It'll be a sad day when it closes. It will be, I'm sure I can say more, but yeah, we'll leave it at that.

WM: Mahalo so much for sitting and talking stories with us.

AM: Yeah. Yeah.