Lifelong Director Captivates Lifelong Learners

Kalai Strode never thought he’d live through a North Dakota winter, but as chance has it, the 67-year-old filmmaker not only survived the winter, he thrived in it.

Kalai was born in Hollywood, Calif., in December 1946. His father, Woody Strode, played professional football with Kenny Washington and was a college teammate of Jackie Robinson. His mother, Luukialuana Kealohapauole Kaluhiokalani Kalaeloa, a native of Hawaii, was a hula dancer and actress.

His parents first met in Hawaii. Woody was there for football and his mother was a hula dancer at a luau. Storytelling is in Kalai’s blood, as his mother wouldn’t leave the Matson ocean liner before getting a commitment from Woody.

“Promise me we’ll meet again,” she said.

“I can’t promise that,” Woody remarked.

As the boat began leaving the pier, Woody panicked. He made the promise and Luukialuana dove off the moving ship and swam back to land.

“True story, I tell you,” Kalai said.

Years later, Woody and Luukialuana met by chance at a Hollywood establishment. They married six months later.

Kalai grew up in a two-story house called Tortilla Flats. It was on the outskirts of Hollywood and was home to many Polynesian entertainers, actors, dancers and extras. Woody began playing football for the Calgary Stampeders in the Canadian Football League and won the Grey Cup in 1948. It was around that time when the family moved to a chicken ranch outside of Montebello, Calif. After Woody retired from football and began wrestling, the family moved to East Los Angeles.

“I learned to speak Spanish, even though I was part of the neighborhood, I was always fighting someone,” Kalai explained. “My father taught me how to pin people; I could handle myself.”

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Lifelong Learning Quote

“All the world is my school and all humanity is my teacher.”

George Whitman (1913–2011)
Director’s Corner
OLLI Brainstorm Findings and Actions

We are always trying to obtain feedback from you, as OLLI members. This summer we held a brainstorming session in conjunction with the Summer Showcase in Grand Forks and Bismarck. We had excellent discussions in both locations. Thank you to those who provided input.

We began the brainstorming with the following focused questions: Where would you like the OLLI courses/events held (hosting sites)? What benefits should OLLI membership include? What are some of your ideas to expand membership? How should we expand outreach activities to “get the word out” about OLLI? Would you be willing to volunteer for OLLI (e.g. share curriculum and instructor ideas each semester, be a classroom greeter, talk about OLLI to an organization you are a member of, etc.)?

Through the brainstorming sessions in May, some of the highlights from our discussions include:

• Offer courses at additional locations to bring OLLI out to the community – independent living facilities (reduced parking issues for off-campus locations)
• Use Interactive Video or technology to expand OLLI to other communities
• Invite a friend to one session of an OLLI course
• Hand deliver a catalog to a neighbor
• Continue offering “free” lectures, movies or other educational activities
• Have an OLLI membership card – with discounts at various locations (discounted health club/gym membership)
• Have a business sponsor an OLLI event or activity
• Develop online courses for OLLI members
• Develop an OLLI gift card or certificate
• Develop an outreach package (dvd, catalog, flier and intro letter) that can be shared

Again, thank you OLLI members for sharing your thoughts with us. Your feedback and guidance make the OLLI Program even stronger. If you would like to see the full list of brainstorming ideas, email me at lynette.krenelka@UND.edu and I will have a copy sent.

One of the new ideas that we are incorporating is to “bring a friend” to OLLI. After members have had a chance to register for their favorite OLLI courses, lectures, movies, trips, etc., members will receive an email with a link where they can complete a short form online and provide their friend’s name and which course or lecture they are going to attend. The URL is http://und.edu/academics/extended-learning/olli/friend. This should be available on August 22nd following the two Showcases.

OLLI is in the preliminary stage of planning for online offerings – especially for the winter semesters when travel may be more difficult. We will keep you updated on this new activity.

In trying to reach more people who are not yet aware of OLLI and its great opportunities, an outreach package is being developed. The outreach package will be available early August and will also be available at the Showcases. It will include an introductory letter explaining OLLI, DVD of OLLI featuring OLLI members and OLLI instructors, flier and current catalog.

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In the 7th grade, Kalai started befriending Japanese-American students. “I learned about Japanese culture,” Kalai said, “So when I got to college, I studied Japanese. I qualified for the Education Abroad program and spent a year in Japan.”

Kalai graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Oriental Languages from UCLA and in 1971, he completed his master’s degree in Asian Studies from the East-West Center University in Hawaii.

After earning his master’s degree, he moved to Glendora, Calif., and worked in the circulation department with the Los Angeles Times. Kalai tried going back to school for his Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in cinematography from the University of California, Los Angeles, but he ran out of money. He sought the advice of a colleague, applied for the Assistant Director’s Training Program and was one of 13 people selected for the program out of more than 2,000 applicants.

His first assignment as an assistant director trainee was on the 1976 mini-series “Roots.” In 1978, he became a full-pledged member of the Directors Guild of America and worked until 2001 as an assistant director. He worked on dozens of movies and TV series, including “The Lost Boys,” “For Keeps” and “Lottery!” His last show included eight seasons with “Diagnosis Murder,” where he met his wife, Pamela, an actress and Grand Forks, N.D., native.

After completing “Diagnosis Murder,” Kalai wanted to move to Hawaii, so on September 10, 2001, the couple flew to Honolulu, where they spent 13 years. Kalai continued work as an assistant director and became a Teamster movie driver. Pam was a stand-in actress for six seasons of the TV series “Lost.”

One day, after completing a pre-employment physical for the movie, “The River,” Kalai was diagnosed with Mantle cell lymphoma, a type of blood cancer. He underwent five months of chemotherapy and was eventually ruled to be in remission. In early 2013, after a routine PET scan revealed his cancer had returned, Kalai and Pam made the decision to move to Grand Forks to be closer to the Mayo Clinic.

Kalai maintains a hyper sense of positivity about his cancer and even the move from tropical Hawaii to North Dakota.

“It’s because of the North Dakota nice people. Just like Hawaiians, they have a nice spirit!” stated Kalai.

It was by chance that Kalai began teaching for OLLI. After trying to secure a teaching opportunity with the University’s American Indian Studies program (Kalai is part Creek, Blackfoot and Cherokee), he came across the OLLI program, submitted a course idea and hasn’t looked back.

“All of a sudden, I was teaching,” explained Kalai, “Pam was with me at my last class, she was moved, she described it as my bliss.”

He explains his last course, The Legend of the World Savior, as, “Interdisciplinary – a combination of religion, mythology, astronomy and psychology,” and as a filmmaker, he looks to “draw out the real story, find the common core.”

For the fall 2013 semester, Kalai taught “Buckwheat, Charlie Chan and Other Myths in Hollywood Films.” Course participants created their own movie scripts and tried to identify their own “golden moment.”

“We went through their lives, their challenges, romances that fell through, romances that came together, all these different stories — they were moved by their own movie,” explained Kalai. “Everyone has a golden moment, when they were at the top of the earth, had a thing they accomplished in their lives where they raised up their arms, cheered and applauded. They might talk about that moment for the rest of their lives.”

Due to health reasons, Kalai won’t teach during the upcoming OLLI semester, but looks forward to his next adventure, either in North Dakota or in warmer climates.

You can view a 10-minute video of Kalai’s previous course, The Legend of the World Savior, online at UND.edu/olli/online-resources.
Grand Forks

- Read’em and Write
- IMPACT (International Movement Promoting Assault Contravention Training)
- Yoga for All
- The Play’s the Thing
- The Smithsonian American Art Museum - Picturing America
- Fall Colors: Landscape & Outdoor Portrait Photography
- Men’s a cappella Choral Singing
- Texas Tea and Natural Gas
- Taking Wing - Fall Migration in the Red River Valley
- American Indian Social Justice and Religion
- The Assassins
- Biography of Jesus
- Why Did They Leave?? Germans from Russia

Free & Open to the Public (registration required)

- LifeSource
- Author’s Notes: At First Sight
- Fraud...On So Many Levels

Bismarck

- The Smithsonian American Art Museum - Picturing America
- The Eastern Theater of the American Civil War
- “What Ever Happened to…..?”
- An Afternoon with Mary Ellen
- Texas Tea and Natural Gas
- Language and Culture in Spanish Speaking Countries
- Political Science: Something in Common
- Historical Domestic Textiles
- Bismarck…Days Gone By
- Tour - Laughing Sun Brewing Company (October 2)

Free & Open to the Public (registration required)

- LifeSource
- Telephone & E-Scams, Mail Fraud, Cyber-Phishing
- Gangs in North Dakota

Did you know?

OLLI@UND provides online videos to members for free!
UND.edu/olli/online-resources
One of Ken Dawes’s friends once said, “You must not retire out of something, retire into something; don’t rest and rust.” Dawes, a retired professor from the University of North Dakota, has done everything but oxidize since his retirement.

“I enjoy teaching, and I especially enjoy teaching lifelong learners,” Dawes said. “They have all kinds of wonderful questions and experiences, so OLLI is a wonderful program for me.”

A native of Grand Forks, N.D., Dawes finds enjoyment in learning and teaching about local topics. A veteran OLLI presenter, some of his past courses include: Rabbi Benjamin Papermaster and the Jewish Community in Early Grand Forks, Ku Klux Klan in Grand Forks, The Child Welfare Movement in Early North Dakota, and the Great Depression. Dawes has an upcoming lecture this fall, From the Black Forest of Germany to the Steppes of Russia to the Plains of North Dakota: The Long Journey. The lecture will be held from 10 a.m. – noon on October 15 at Parkwood Senior Living in Grand Forks.

Dawes is also working on an upcoming course, German POWs in Grand Forks. While it may take some people days or weeks to prepare an OLLI course, for Dawes, it can take months. He focuses his attention on the details and enjoys the fact-finding quests.

“It’s very important to be accurate if you’re going to teach,” Dawes said. “I try to be sure whatever I’m saying is valid.”

Case in point, Dawes is planning a late summer trip to Iowa to prepare facts for his upcoming German POWs in Grand Forks course.

In addition to enjoying retirement, researching subjects and teaching OLLI courses, Dawes and his wife of 52 years, Margie, who he met while attending a continuing education course in Williston, N.D., enjoy babysitting their grandkids, visiting with friends over coffee, reading and woodworking.

“I don’t think there’s ever been a morning when we’ve awakened and thought, ‘there’s nothing to do.’” Dawes explained. “It’s wonderful to always learn and socialize with people. OLLI’s a good program to do that.”
Wild, Wild, West Adventure

9 Days/8 Nights
September 24 - October 2, 2014

It’s time to giddy-up into the Wild West for an unforgettable adventure. You’ll experience the captivating natural beauty that has drawn visitors through our great nation for generations. Let OLLI@UND take you to these and other well known landmarks and monuments.

1. Dickinson Museum Center
   Dinner on your own
   Lodging is at the Quality Inn

2. Black Hills National Forest & Spearfish Canyon Lodge
   Lodging is at The White House Inn
   Fort Hays Old West Chuckwagon Supper and Show

3. Custer State Park
   Buffalo Roundup Wallow Chili cook-off

4. Custer State Park & Crazy Horse Monument
   Mount Rushmore National Memorial
   Lodging is at the Hampton Inn - Deadwood, SD

5. Travel to Jackson Hole, WY
   Lodging is at the 49er Inn & Suites

6. Grand Teton National Park
   Jenny Lake
   Lunch at the Jackson Lake Lodge

7. Grand Teton National Park
   Yellowstone National Park & Wapiti Valley
   Chuckwagon Dinner Buffet & Entertainment

8. Big Horn National Forest
   Medora
   Dinner at Eagle Ridge Lodge

9. Travel home

$1,330/person (double occupancy)
$1,285/person (triple occupancy)
$1,780/person (single occupancy)

Register by July 23!

Register through UND.edu/olli or 1.800.225.5683
Leadership Council Spotlight

Debra Hopkins
Birthplace: St. Paul, MN

Background:

- Self-employed insurance agent for 27 years
- Owner of “My Creative Heart by Debra Kay and Garden Girlz”

Hobbies:

- Being Gramma
- Swimming
- Kayaking
- Snowboarding
- Roller blading
- Gardening
- Writing (hoping to publish)

Interesting Information:

- I've been told that I'm kinda ‘interesting’

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Director’s Corner: continued from page 2...

We are also expanding the marketing for the Fall 2014 semester in conjunction with a large membership drive; trying to reach new people. Invite your friends to join you at the upcoming ‘enhanced’ Showcases. Mark your calendars now:

**Grand Forks Showcase:**
Monday, August 18, 4:30 – 6:00 pm, Gorecki Alumni Center, featuring Dr. Robert Boyd, former Vice President of Student Affairs at UND will present **North Dakota: The Rectangle Gets Recognition**

**Bismarck Showcase:**
Thursday, August 21, 4:30 – 6:00 pm, NECE Building, Room 431, featuring Jasper Schneider, State Director, USDA Rural Development for North Dakota will present **The Next Chapter**

Register for your favorite OLLI courses, lectures, movies, trips online. You don’t have to wait for the Showcase – where we will again be taking registrations.

If you were not able to participate in the brainstorming sessions but would like to share your ideas, please call me at 701-777-4883 or email me at lynette.krenelka@UND.edu.

I look forward to a great new semester with lots of new faces!

- Lynette Krenelka, Director, Office of Extended Learning