

## **Alice C. Pack: An Exemplary Life Worth Memorializing**

*From the 2011 Alice Pack Lecture given at  
Brigham Young University–Hawaii*

**Lynn Henrichsen**

Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA

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I am grateful for the honor of delivering the inaugural Alice C. Pack Lecture and the opportunity to introduce you to Alice Chandler Pack on the 100th anniversary of her birth. I came to know Alice well as we worked together extensively over a period of 11 years. In that period, she influenced my life and career greatly. A few of you older folks—faculty members here today—were acquainted with Alice, either as her students or her colleagues. Like you, I had the privilege of associating with this great woman on a personal and professional basis. Unlike you, however, I did not meet Alice here in Laie. My first meetings with her took place on the island of Tutuila in American Samoa, where, in 1976, I was working for the Department of Education. That same year, Alice came to Pago Pago as part of a Brigham Young University–Hawaii bachelor’s degree program in Samoa for Samoan schoolteachers and principals who did not yet have college degrees. Of course, Alice’s reputation preceded her to Samoa, so when she arrived, I asked her to speak at a meeting of our local American Samoa TESOL organization. She agreed, and that was the beginning of a long and productive professional relationship. In many ways she became a professional mentor and “mother” to me. In Samoa, where my family and I lived far from our family on the mainland, she even served as a surrogate grandmother to my baby daughter Cristina, who eventually graduated from BYU–Hawaii and never forgot the little stuffed dog that Alice knit and gave to her on one of her trips to Samoa.

Most people who knew Alice were impressed by one or more of the following characteristics: energetic, hard working, practical, dedicated, enthusiastic, and productive. Through my contacts with Alice in Samoa and later in Hawaii, I

learned that her reputation was based on reality. In fact, there was nothing artificial or pretentious about Alice.

In my lecture today, I hope to touch on each of those characteristics. First, however, I need to provide a little biographical background information on Alice and her parents. Alice's father, Ernest William Chandler, was not a university-educated academic. He grew up in rural southern Colorado in the United States, working in the mines and on the railroad. Like many in those days, his large family was extremely poor, yet they were also generous, and Ernest himself was filled with ambition.

Alice's mother, Helene Elise Margarete Luck, was an immigrant to the United States. Born and raised a Lutheran in Germany, Helene first learned of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the sponsor of Brigham Young University–Hawaii) when her mother heard the missionaries singing at a street meeting. Along with her mother, grandmother, sisters, and a brother, Helene quickly converted to the church and soon immigrated to America.

These two, very different individuals—a poor boy from Colorado trying to make it big and an immigrant girl from Germany still learning English—met, fell in love, and married in 1909 in the LDS temple in Salt Lake City, Utah. And then, on April 5, 1911, in Salt Lake City, Utah, Alice Chandler became the second of three daughters born to this union.

The young Chandler family lived a happy, prosperous life. Ernest worked at several occupations, built a nice home in Salt Lake City, and even had a fine horse and surrey. Then, when everything seemed to be going well for them, Ernest awoke one night, smelled smoke, and realized that the house was on fire. He awoke his family and got them outside, but the house and all their material possessions burned to the ground. They were left with nothing but the nightclothes they were wearing. Having no insurance, Ernest was forced to start over from scratch.

He had heard lots of wonderful things about Southern California, and he had just enough money to pay the train fare for his family to get there. So, that's where they went to start over. In those days, California was America's "land of promise," but life there was not easy for new arrivals. The family lived in a run-down hotel for the first week, and if Alice's father had possessed the money for the return fare, they might have returned to Utah. Instead, he went to work driving a Model T Ford "Jitney bus" through the streets of Los Angeles, picking up fares along the way. He

later took a job as a milk wagon driver, then started selling insurance, and eventually became a successful realtor. The family lived in a succession of houses in various cities in California, such as Highland Park, Pasadena, Long Beach, and Venice.

Thus, though she had roots in Utah, Colorado, and Germany, Alice grew up in Southern California and was a “California girl” in many ways. She spent as much free time outdoors as possible exploring nature. During summer the family spent vacation months in a rented cottage on the beaches at Venice, Santa Monica, or Long Beach, and Alice learned to swim in the ocean.

Alice was also an excellent student in school and an avid reader. She earned top grades in high school, participated in the photography club, performed in school dramatic productions, and competed on the girls basketball team and the debate team (Figure 1). Her biggest challenge was choosing which courses to take every semester because she wanted to take everything that was offered. She hoped to go to college. During her senior year in high school (1927–28), however, the Great Depression was beginning. Money began to be hard to get, and things got tight financially. She soon realized that higher education would be “impossible financially.” Instead of going to college, Alice found some temporary secretarial jobs. She did manage to take a few night classes at the University of Southern

California, but her long-anticipated dream of earning a university degree would have to wait a while.

During high school, Alice met a young man in her French class, Paul Pack, who had recently moved to California from Kamas, Utah. Although she dated other boys, Alice said that the longer she knew Paul, the more she liked him. This increasing interest developed into lasting love, and after a two-year engagement, in 1930, at age 19, Alice married Paul.

In those days, there was no temple of the LDS church in Los Angeles, so Alice, Paul, and her mother drove to Salt Lake



*Figure 1. Alice Chandler in high school*

City to be married in the temple there. It was a grueling two-day, two-night trip. They spent a short September honeymoon camping in the Uinta Mountains; money was tight, and Paul wanted to show Alice his old “stomping grounds.” It was also cold in the mountains, so Alice was happy to return to Southern California, where they established their home (Figure 2) and where Paul developed a very successful nursery and landscaping business in Sherman Oaks. While Paul devoted his energies to plants, Alice dedicated herself to raising their family. They had seven children together: Bert, Virginia, David, Paul, Patricia, Barbara, and Dorothy.



*Figure 2. Home in Southern California.*

After a wonderful life in California, with their children grown or growing up, Paul and Alice decided to retire in 1955. They settled down in the town of Meridian, Idaho, looking forward to a peaceful retirement and life with their children and grandchildren in a rural environment. Always energetic, Alice kept busy teaching youth seminary classes for the church. Life was good.

Five years after Paul and Alice moved to Idaho, however, their idyllic life and retirement plans were interrupted by a letter from the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, calling Paul to serve as a labor

missionary beginning in January of 1961. He was to be in charge of landscaping the new Polynesian Cultural Center, which is adjacent to BYU–Hawaii, in a town called Laie. At that point, I don't think Paul or Alice realized what they were in for, or that they would spend not just two but the next 20 years of their lives in Laie.

As you can see from this picture of campus in those days (Figure 3), the newly constructed Church College of Hawaii campus (the predecessor to Brigham Young University–Hawaii) was much smaller then than it is now. The campus was fairly simple. The plans for the new Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC), in contrast, were ambitious. At that time, however, only some of the PCC villages had been constructed. The ground around the new buildings looked more like a war zone than an inviting tropical paradise. Turning them into attractive, verdant Polynesian paradises became Paul's mission for many years to come. He also helped landscape the new Church College of Hawaii dormitories.



*Figure 3. Church College of Hawaii campus in 1960.*

Alice was called to serve as well. Using her writing skills, she authored and edited a two-volume set of books on the labor missionary work in Hawaii. Her

main work, however, was as a health missionary, working with the Tongan families who were living near Laie. These Polynesian families, working as missionaries, had just finished building the Church College of Hawaii campus and now were starting to work on this new project, the Polynesian Cultural Center.

While caring for and interacting with the Tongan families, and as a result of hearing so many of the Polynesian missionaries and spouses pray and bear their testimonies at church in their native languages, Alice decided to take Tongan language classes at the Church College of Hawaii. Tongan was the only Polynesian language taught at the Church College of Hawaii at that time.

Those classes whetted her appetite, and when her mission was officially over, she decided it was time to obtain that college degree that she had dreamed of so long ago. Her husband obtained work with the Hawaii Temple and with Zion's Securities, and she officially enrolled at the Church College of Hawaii in 1962 as a freshman, at the young age of 53. Some of the students on campus couldn't believe someone so old would think of going to college. She immersed herself in her studies, however, and soon was taking 20 to 24 credit hours of coursework per semester! She graduated two and a half years later, *summa cum laude*, as valedictorian of her graduating class.



*Figure 4. Alice's University of Hawaii graduation photo.*

With that success behind her, she became the manager of the Church College of Hawaii bookstore. While working there, she noticed the ESL texts ordered for the English Language Institute (ELI) classes, and this got her interested in the field of teaching English as a second language. She approached Wayne Allison, then head of the English Department on campus, and asked if she could teach in the ELI program if she went and got her MA in TESOL at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He said, "I'll not only hire you, but you can teach now, while you take your coursework." So, Alice enrolled in the MA TESOL program at the University of Hawaii, leaving early in the morning each day to take classes and then rushing back to Laie, so she could teach her ELI courses at the Church College of Hawaii in the afternoons.



The evenings were spent correcting homework and exams. I can't imagine when she ever slept during that year and a half! She later wrote, "I attended four consecutive daily classes at the University of Hawaii from 8:00 a.m. through noon and then raced home to teach four consecutive ESL classes at the Church College of Hawaii. Any spare time was spent studying or preparing lessons. It was a grueling year and a half and I felt fortunate to survive it" (Figure 4).

But her appetite for higher education was still not satisfied. She later went back to school again, and in 1975 Alice received a doctoral degree from Walden University in Florida.

As a Church College of Hawaii faculty member, Alice taught courses not only in the ELI program but also for the newly created BA TESOL program. It was not so sophisticated back then, but the BA TESOL program made news, thanks in large part to an article that Alice's colleague, Bill Conway, wrote about the program that was published in the *TESOL Quarterly*. All of a sudden, the worldwide community of TESOL professionals became aware of the Church College of Hawaii's new BA TESOL program.

At the same time that the BA TESOL program was born, so too was the *TESL Reporter*. Alice and Bill Conway started the journal in 1967 (in their spare time, of course!). Back then there were only a few journals in our field: *Language Learning*, *English Language Teaching Journal*, the *English Language Teaching Forum* (by the U.S. government), and the *TESOL Quarterly* (which also began in 1967). Alice was the assistant editor of the *TESL Reporter* for one year and then took over as the editor in 1968 when Bill left. She edited the journal for 12 years, until 1980, when she retired (and I became editor).

I have my own story about this journal published here at BYU-Hawaii. While I was editor, I once went to Taiwan as a consultant to an English language program there and visited National Taiwan Normal University. While there, I was taken to the university library. They proudly showed me a display of a few journals in our field: *TESOL Quarterly*, *Modern Language Journal*, *RELC Journal*. There, right in the middle of them all, they had the *TESL Reporter* on display. I took it off the shelf, opened it up, and showed them my name inside as editor. They were impressed. I also happened to have just published an article in the very issue of the *RELC Journal* they had on display, which I showed them also. They were doubly impressed then. They thought they had a real academic celebrity

in their midst. It was my little moment of fame—thanks to the *TESL Reporter*. I should add that what the *TESL Reporter* did for my academic reputation in this instance, it also did for the Church College of Hawaii and Brigham Young University–Hawaii’s reputation around the world for many years. Academics in many nations became aware of this campus through the *TESL Reporter*, which eventually was sent to thousands of subscribers in over 50 countries.

From its very first issue, the *TESL Reporter* focused on practical teaching methods, effective lessons, and so on. But in addition to that, it also publicized the campus and the campus programs. So, when the new BA TESOL degree was announced in 1967, it was publicized in the *TESL Reporter*. This undergraduate program was the first of its type (in the United States at least) and recognized what some people still don’t realize today—that teaching English to foreign students requires special training. Later, the BA TESOL program was revised, and the new teacher-education curriculum was also published in the *TESL Reporter*. When distinguished academics visited the BYU–Hawaii campus, the *TESL Reporter* also published articles about them. For instance, when Arthur Henry King, a world-famous leader in the field of English language teaching, a former leader of the British Council, and then a professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah (a sister campus to Brigham Young University–Hawaii), came to campus, a photograph of him in his bowler hat graced the front cover of the *TESL Reporter*. In all these ways, the *TESL Reporter* made waves in the profession and also helped build Laie’s reputation as a mecca in the world of TESOL. Reading these articles, people naturally thought, “Laie is the place to go—a place to connect and learn about TESOL.”

News about campus programs was one thing, but coming up with scholarly articles to print was another story. You don’t just announce a new journal and suddenly have a copy to print. In the early stages, Alice herself had to write a lot of the articles that appeared in the *TESL Reporter*. Some of these articles were based on papers she wrote for her classes at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Besides producing and editing the content of the journal, Alice also produced the camera-ready copy to be delivered to the printers. Making this task even more challenging was the fact that, in those days, there were no personal computers and no computer-based desktop publishing options. It was a very different process, starting with a Fuller Typositor, into which you had to type every line of text twice



and then push a button, and the machine would justify the text and (after emitting a chemical smell and making whooshing sounds) produce a little strip of photographic paper with a column of justified type set. The result looked much better than what a typewriter could produce, but it was a pain to work with. Then you had to cut and trim the strip of typeset text, wax it on the back with hot wax, and paste it up on a master sheet of grid paper while working at a light table. Headers, footers, page numbers, and so on all had to be typeset separately and pasted in by hand. A special room on the CCH campus was the *TESL Reporter* room with the light table. In short, producing the *TESL Reporter* was a labor-intensive task requiring not just academic knowledge but specialized technical skills. Because of her previous experiences (e.g., editing and producing the labor missionary books), Alice had the right combination of skills and could do the job. If she hadn't, the *TESL Reporter* probably would have ceased publication. Once the final, camera-ready copy was complete, film negatives had to be shot and masked properly with orange paper and liquid Rubylith applied with a small paintbrush. Finally, it was time to go to press. Issues of the *TESL Reporter* were sometimes printed on campus at CCH and sometimes at a commercial press in Honolulu. All that is now history and the only thing that's left from those days is this pair of rusty scissors (Figure 5), which is one of my heirlooms from when I was here. I still have and still use them. These were the scissors that Alice and I used to cut out the paper when laying out the *TESL Reporter*. Now it's all done electronically. We "cut and paste" with a mouse. If you had told us back then that we would be cutting and pasting with a mouse in the future, we would have said, "What



Figure 5. *TESL Reporter* production scissors.

on earth are you talking about? We might have cockroaches in the *TESL Reporter* production room, but we certainly don't have mice!"

Alice was not content with the success of the *TESL Reporter*; she published other things too. Her dissertation turned into a series of three books in the Dyad Learning

Program, which were published by Newbury House, a leader in the field in those days. The books were really popular and also very innovative because they had the tutor book and the student book all in one volume. If you ever examined them, you would think they were printed wrong because of their unique design. When using them, the tutoring student worked from the front while the learning student worked from the back, but upside down. This design allowed students to pair up and teach or test each other. It was very successful for helping students learn English verbs, pronouns, and especially prepositions.

At the University of Hawaii, Alice worked with Professor Gerald Dykstra, and she wrote one volume in his popular book series *Guided Composition: Guided® Free*. Alice also wrote a book titled *Learning to Type in English as a Second Language*. So, she published five books in a time when not too many BYU–Hawaii faculty published books at all. Then, she and I got together, and we published two more books before she retired, bringing the total to seven.

Alice’s last two books started out as handouts for English 105, a basic writing class for local as well as international students preparing for freshman composition. Though we had a textbook, we still had to supplement it with a lot of exercises on extra handouts. Pretty soon the handouts turned into a packet. Eventually, the packet became quite thick and self-sufficient, so we decided to throw out the textbook. Then we thought, “Why don’t we turn our packet into a book?” So we worked on it some more. Every evening at 5 o’clock when the official workday ended, we would start working on our book and continue for another hour or so. We created more exercises and added explanations and examples, and pretty soon we had it polished up. It ended up being two books—*Sentence Construction* and *Sentence Combination*—which were published by Newbury House Publishers and stayed in print for over 20 years. Over the years these two books sold 50,000 copies all around the world.

Now, I feel a bit selfish telling you this, but I will. I received my half of the royalties for the two books and put the money in the bank so I could make a down payment on a house someday. In contrast, altruistic Alice took her half of the royalties and gave them to BYU–Hawaii, and that was the beginning of the Alice Pack Scholarship Fund for BYU–Hawaii students majoring in TESOL. Alice was dedicated to scholarly work, but more important, she was most dedicated to helping her students. She loved the school, and she loved her students who came here. She worked her heart out for them.

Alice's influence for good was not limited to this campus, of course. In the international field of TESOL, people began to recognize her hard work. She presented at many national and international conferences and was called upon to conduct workshops for various institutions and organizations, like the Peace Corps.

Here on campus, she was also recognized. In 1981, she received the BYU–Hawaii Alumni Distinguished Service Award. In 1977, just before I came, she was nominated by her peers to deliver the David O. McKay Lecture, an honor given to distinguished faculty at BYU–Hawaii. Her lecture was titled, “Man and God’s Gift of Language.” As she began that lecture, she said, “As I stand here this morning and look over this group of students and colleagues, I’d like to preface this lecture with a few words of appreciation for the many opportunities and blessings, the great enrichment, this school has brought into my life. Because of this institution, the education I dreamed of in my youth has become a reality.”

Those few words explain why she gave the money she made from her textbooks and other sources to BYU–Hawaii—so that the same reality could take place for many of the students here at BYU–Hawaii. She knew what it was like to not have money, to not be able to go to school. So, she worked her heart out, and she gave a lot of the money she earned to this school so that the dreams of the students here at this school could come true.

In 1981, at the age of 70, Alice retired, we thought, to Oceanside, California. But then she started working as a consultant to the United States International University. She was never one to rest for very long. As a consultant or sometimes just as a tourist, she traveled to Spain, the Grand Canyon, Israel, Florida, and India. In addition, she took her *Dyad* books and turned them into a computer software program, and again, she gave the royalties from that program to BYU–Hawaii. As her husband’s health deteriorated, she devoted herself to caring for him, and she left TESOL matters in the hands of the new generation—like me.

I owe a lot to Alice Pack. She helped me get my career going. My first professional article was published in the *TESL Reporter*. I’ve since published 60 different articles, but my first one was in the *TESL Reporter*, thanks to her. She also helped me get my first long-term university job. I taught for a brief time at the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma, and then I worked for the Department of Education in American Samoa. I was there when I met Alice. She was in

Samoa with a program BYU–Hawaii had for Samoan schoolteachers, and we became acquainted. In fact, I helped her teach a course. One day she said, “We have an opening at BYU–Hawaii. It’s a one-year contract, in the place of a Spanish/TESOL teacher who is going on leave.” Well, I got the one-year appointment, but it lasted longer than expected. The other professor never came back, and I stayed 15 years. During that time, Alice and I gave many conference presentations together, and we wrote those books I just told you about. She eventually passed the *TESL Reporter* and the scissors on to me, and she inspired me to get my doctoral degree. I thought, “Well, if she can do it, maybe I can too,” and I earned my doctorate at the University of Hawaii the way she earned her master’s degree—commuting back and forth while teaching at BYU–Hawaii.

Let me say a little more about my first publication. This story might inspire some of you. I stopped in Laie on the way to Samoa, but I don’t think I met

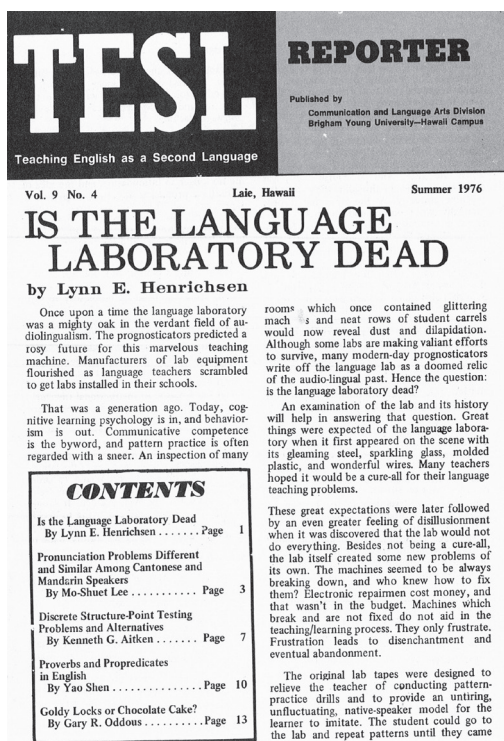


Figure 6. *TESL Reporter* front page with my article.

Alice on that occasion. I did, however, meet some people here, and they said, “We’ve got these back issues of the *TESL Reporter* just taking up space in the closet; take a few.” So I got copies of some back issues and kept them on my desk when I got to Samoa. Every morning when I got up, I would read an article. They were interesting, practical, and useful—just my kind of stuff. Some were better than others; some not so good. That made me think, “If these guys can get their ideas published, maybe I can also.” So I rolled out a humble manuscript based on my experience in Oklahoma running a language

laboratory and sent it off. A couple of months later, there I was in print, front and center on the first page of the *TESL Reporter* (Figure 6), and I rejoiced, “I am a published author!” That was just the first of, like I said, many other publications, but that first one was noteworthy because it was the first, and Alice was the one who made it happen for me.

Alice also gave me a great example of hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm. I’m now getting older myself and thinking that someday soon (in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years) I’m going to retire. When I think about that, I get sad because it sounds like my professional life will end. Then I think of Alice. Her more famous life *began* when she retired. Maybe my life will just begin at retirement if I follow Alice’s example of dedication and enthusiasm.

Besides being dedicated and successful in her professional life, Alice lived a broader life that was healthy and well balanced. She engaged in artistic activities that benefited her emotionally, church activities that increased her spiritual power, and physical activities that preserved her strength. She also developed strong international perspectives and family relationships. I want to talk about each of these points in a little detail.

Believe it or not, while she was doing everything else, Alice took art classes—drawing, watercolor, and oil painting. At 4 o’clock some afternoons, she would just leave her work on her desk, run out the door, and sit in one of the inner courtyards and sketch or paint with the BYU–Hawaii students enrolled in art classes. A lot of Alice’s artwork had Hawaiian themes or portrayed seascapes. She loved the ocean, and a lot of her sketches were done in Samoa, where we met. Even after she *really* retired and moved to Oceanside, California, she continued to draw and paint. For several years, she sent us Christmas cards with a personal watercolor painting on the cover of each card.

Alice also knitted (almost constantly, just to keep her hands busy) and also did quilting. She made beautiful Hawaiian quilts. Do you realize how much work it is to make a Hawaiian quilt? She also made early American-style quilts for her family. She just never stopped—even in her “retirement.”

Alice also enjoyed and magnified her various church responsibilities. While I was working with her, she taught Sunday School classes for many years, and she also worked in the temple. If it wasn’t her day for art class, it might be her day for the temple. On those days, she’d get up at 4:00 p.m., leave everything

on her desk, and run out the door to the temple, where she would work for six or seven more hours.

Alice was wise enough to take care of herself physically. She loved to go swimming. She and her husband lived on Laie Point, and she would go down the little stairway to Clissold's Beach and go swimming in the evening in the ocean. When she moved to Oceanside, California, she would go swimming in the ocean there. I'm told that she also took aerobics classes—at age 89!

As I mentioned earlier, besides interacting with all the international students on campus, Alice also traveled to many different countries around the world. She seemed to have been to nearly every island group in the South Pacific, and she also went to India, the Middle East, and Europe.

Finally, I should point out that she was always dedicated to her family. When her children were young, Alice sacrificed her school and career ambitions to raise them. They gave her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren in her older years. When she retired from BYU–Hawaii, she had 45 grandchildren and 72 great-grandchildren! Some of the lucky ones got to visit her here in Hawaii. Others visited her in California after she retired. Of course, during those years, Alice also dedicated herself to caring for her husband as his health declined. And on top of all this, she also took care of her mother, who lived to the ripe old age of 103!

After she retired, Alice did come back to BYU–Hawaii a couple of times. The first time she came back was in 1981, when she received the BYU–Hawaii Distinguished Alumni Service Award in honor of “her noteworthy career achievements and community and church service.” Dr. Eric Shumway, then vice president for academics at BYU–Hawaii, called her “really an amazing woman.” Truer words were never spoken.

Alice came back to BYU–Hawaii again in the year 2000 as a BYU–Hawaii distinguished alumna representing the English Language Teaching and Learning Department at the invitation of her former student—and a former *TESL Reporter* editor—department chair Mark James. That was her last trip to Hawaii.

In sum, Alice C. Pack was a super woman, right? Alas, she was also a mere mortal. She didn't live forever. She passed away at the young age of 92 on June 4, 2002. She's been gone now for over eight years, but you got to know her a little bit today.



At the end of the movie based on James Michener's novel *Hawaii*, Reverend Abner Hale's final words were, "In this place [Hawaii] I have known God, and Jerusha Bromley [his wife], and Ruth Malama Kanakoa (the Ali'i Nui); and beyond that a man has no need of friends." To paraphrase again, in my final words to you today, I would like to say, "In this place [BYU-Hawaii] I had the privilege of working with and learning a great deal from Alice Chandler Pack. She was a true and wonderful friend—to me and to this institution!" Thank you for letting me come back to Laie and introduce her to you!

### **About the Author**

*Lynn Henrichsen is a TESOL professor in the Linguistics and English Language Department at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. He began his university-teaching career at BYU-Hawaii in 1977, where he worked closely with Alice C. Pack. In the years since then, he has taught, conducted research, and spoken at conferences in many countries; he has published numerous books and articles; and he has received awards of various kinds. When invited to deliver the first annual Alice Pack Lecture at BYU-H, however, he considered this opportunity to pay tribute to his former mentor and colleague one of his greatest professional honors.*