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PBS Hawai'i to air documentary on late Hawaiian history professor, activist

Kū Kanaka/Stand Tall premieres June 15 at 8 pm on PBS Hawai'i



Kanalu Young, center, was in the front line of the 1993 'Onipa'a March in Honolulu, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Hawaiian Kingdom overthrow.

Photo: Ed Greevy

HONOLULU, HI – A half-hour documentary about the late University of Hawai'i Hawaiian history professor, Kanalu Young, is set to make its statewide broadcast premiere on PBS Hawai'i. **Kū Kanaka/Stand Tall** premieres Thursday, June 15 at 8 pm on PBS Hawai'i's local film showcase, **PBS Hawai'i Presents**.

A live discussion about the film will take place on **Insights on PBS Hawai'i** at 8:30 pm, following the broadcast premiere of *Kū Kanaka/Stand Tall*.

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The documentary traces Young's story, starting with his fateful dive at age 15 near Diamond Head. The accident paralyzed him from the neck down, with limited use of his hands and arms.

In rehab, he went through a period of rage. According to *Kū Kanaka/Stand Tall* filmmaker Marlene Booth, Young eventually chose a new path. "Kanalū makes a decision that you're in rehab to *not* give up," Booth said. "That makes all the difference."

In 1970s Hawai'i, when the Hawaiian Renaissance was taking root, Young would turn his passion toward learning Hawaiian language, history and culture. In the mid-90s, Young earned a PhD in Pacific Island history and began his career as a Hawaiian history professor at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. During his studies, Young participated in demonstrations, including the 1993 'Onipa'a march in Honolulu that commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Hawaiian kingdom overthrow.

Booth says that Young's personal experience with trauma gave him insight into the trauma experienced by the Hawaiian community. "I think he felt that the Hawaiian movement gained strength by acknowledging trauma, acknowledging loss, and moving forward to recovery," Booth said. "I think he felt that understanding history, re-asserting language, and publicly celebrating culture, was really very important to cultural and national renewal."

Booth, who co-produced the documentary *Pidgin: The Voice of Hawai'i* with Young shortly before his passing in 2008, said that Young was "both a gentle man and a warrior."

"In these times, I think he would say that there is strength in knowing who you are and knowing the various parts of yourself, especially for Native Hawaiians," Booth said.

"I think about him all the time and what he would be making of our times now. And I think he would say, "No give up."

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