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HULA IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL

U.S. BOTANIC GARDEN SHOWCASES HULA PERFORMANCE

KA 'IMI NA'AUAO O HAWAI'I NEI COMES TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 8, 2003 - Washington, DC - There's a school of hula dancers from the Garden Island of Kaua'i that's used to trekking off on cultural exchanges. Sharing the Hawaiian culture is what the Ka 'Imi Na'auao O Hawai'i Nei society is dedicated to doing, and it's what they'll do when they travel to Washington, DC to perform at our nation's garden, the U.S. Botanic Garden on the National Mall.

The dancers will appear in conjunction with the opening of *Our Nation's Crown Jewels*, an exhibit of rare and endangered native Hawaiian plants on display in the USBG Conservatory from August 29 through November 23, 2003. The performance will officially acknowledge and spiritually connect the rare and endangered Hawaiian plants on display with the cultural history of native Hawaiians. The group's performance is scheduled for noon on Saturday, August 30, 2003, and is open to the public.

Hula dancers have a strong connection to the forest. They serve Laka, divine protector of hula and forests, and the embodiment of various of the forest plants. The ceremonies of the dancers will fulfill obligations to Laka by ensuring that the plants comprising the exhibit, the people who attend it, and the knowledge it propagates will *'ulu* -- grow and flourish. The members of Ka 'Imi will present several of the plants, thanking Laka and explaining the botanical and cultural significance of each plant. They will wear lei of plant and other natural materials in their hair and around their necks, wrists, and ankles, and will perform both the ancient hula done to chant and drum and also the modern hula, which adds music.

The group's founder, Roselle Flora Keli'ihonipua Bailey, will be among the performers. Her school and the eight others that form Ka 'Imi Na'auao O Hawai'i Nei will be represented. The performers will arrive from Kaua'i, Maui, Samoa, and California. For more information about the private, nonprofit Ka 'Imi Na'auao O Hawai'i Nei, please visit the organization's website at www.kaimi.org.

The United States Botanic Garden Conservatory is open to the public, free of charge, every day of the year from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Conservatory is located at 100 Maryland Avenue, SW, at the foot of the U.S. Capitol on the National Mall. Visitors are encouraged to take Metrobus and Metrorail. Further information is available by calling 202-225-8333 or visiting our web site at www.usbg.gov.