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## Entertainers mourn Moe Keale, 62

By [Mike Gordon](#)  
and [Wayne Harada](#)  
Advertiser Staff Writers

Moe Keale, the 'ukulele stylist who entertained audiences with his acting and music for more than four decades, died after a heart attack yesterday at Castle Medical Center. He was 62. A pure Hawaiian, Keale was born Dec. 3, 1939, on Ni'ihau, but grew up on O'ahu.

Keale, whose voice brought a tingle of aloha to his music, will be remembered as a gentle, giving treasure in the Island entertainment scene.

"He just exuded a lot of spirit and aloha; he was my dad but my friend, my buddy, too. We cruised; we hanged out together," said Scott Nalani Keale, his only son.

The younger Keale talked to his father Sunday while he was on a teaching mission in Japan. He was en route home, aboard a flight yesterday, when Moe Keale died.

"I called him because I couldn't find a couple of chords to 'Pua Mae'ole,' a song I wanted to teach," Nalani Keale said. "He taught me how; he told me to play it in this particular chord. And I got it. It was awesome. It must've been midnight in Hawai'i at the time. And it was the last time I heard his voice."

### 'One-man halau'

Keale nearly died a year ago when he suffered a heart attack while working out at 24 Hour Fitness in the Windward City Shopping Center. Police officers saved his life.

Keale's regular performing gig was Thursdays and Sundays poolside at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel. Of his many recorded songs, he was best known for "Aloha Is ... A Part of Me, a Part of You," for which he won a Na Hoku Hanohano Award in 1987.

Of his numerous performing gigs, his most recent was his most intimate and endearing.

"Moe would introduce Nalani as a halau," said entertainment booking agent Chriss Heyd. "It was kind of a joke a one-man halau." Keale had been at the hotel since February 1994, and his image graced the hotel's Christmas card this past year.

A frequent nightclub performer, Keale was the lead singer in Eddie Kamae's Sons Of Hawai'i back in the late '60s. He also had his own group, Moe Keale & Anuenue. In 1978, he recorded a solo album, "South Sea Island Magic."

Keale was the seventh child of pure Hawaiian parents. His father came from Ni'ihau, his mother from Kaua'i.

Keale learned to play the 'ukulele when he was 4; an older brother even taught him how to double-strum. He played the instrument as a boy growing up in Palolo Valley, taking it to Paolo Elementary School and Kaimuki High School and, later, as a beachboy, to Waikiki.

Keale did a little of everything in his life, redefining the word versatile.

As a beachboy, his long hair earned him a nickname that stuck for years: "Animal." He was a professional high-diver, a part-time electrician and a radio deejay.

Once, when he was a deejay at KCCN in 1983, a listener requested "Kamehameha Waltz," but Keale couldn't find a copy in the studio. He quickly grabbed an 'ukulele and played it himself.

Most recently, he also was the co-owner of the Lomi Shop at Windward Mall, giving lomi massages by day and performing his music at night.

He got his acting start in 1959 with a role in the Spencer Tracy feature film "The Devil at Four O'Clock," which was followed by a long-run in New York of the stage production of "Paradise Island."

### **Played 'mean' roles**

He appeared in many TV shows, with recurring roles and guest appearances across the dial. It began with a role as a loveable policeman in "The Little People," which later became "The Brian Keith Show."

That led to a recurring role as Truck Kealoha in "Hawaii Five-O," but not until after he worked on the set as an electrician.

He also appeared in "Big Hawaii" and "Magnum, P.I." and in such diverse shows as "Kung Fu," "Charlie's Angels" and Donny and Marie Osmond's "Going Coconuts."

In a 1982 interview, he lamented the way Hawai'i actors typically were cast. "Local guys like myself get some pretty awful roles," he said. "It's work."

Of the fact that he was frequently cast as a "heavy," he said: "I guess I look mean."

He once said acting comes naturally for him, an extension of his personality.

"I'm a happy-go-lucky person," he said in 1977, when he played Garfield Kalahani in "Big Hawai'i."

Bill Kaiwa knew Keale since childhood.

"All our treasures are going," Kaiwa said. "I was with Moe two Sundays ago. I waited at the hospital for six hours the first time he had a heart attack a year ago. He was feeling fine, looking fine. I am shocked."



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Wednesday, April 24, 2002

## His songs made him a Son of Hawaii forever

**Wilfred Nalani 'Moe' Keale / 1939-2002**

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By Rosemarie Bernardo  
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When entertainer Wilfred Nalani "Moe" Keale sang, "it really ran deep into your soul," said Dennis Kamakahi, former group member of Sons of Hawaii.

"It was a reverent voice. It only comes from somebody who has a big soul," Kamakahi said.

Services for Keale, well-known entertainer, actor and humanitarian, who died April 15 at Castle Medical Center, will be Monday. He was 62 years old.

Keale, of pure Hawaiian descent, was born on Dec. 13, 1939. The respected kupuna touched many with his voice.

Keale's album "Aloha Is -- A Part of Me, A Part of You," includes two of the most requested songs on Hawaiian radio. He was a multiple nominee, finalist and winner in many award categories in the Na Hoku Hanohano awards.

Along with music, Keale had a recurring role in "Hawaii Five-O" and made appearances in numerous TV shows such as "Sanford and Son," "Charlie's Angels," "The Islander" and "Pearl."

In 1958, Keale and three others formed a group called the Four K's. Six years later, he joined the Puka Puka Otea Tahitian Show at Queen's Surf.

In 1969, Keale became a part of the musical group Sons of Hawaii. Kamakahi was the youngest member of the group and described Keale as a big brother whom he could look up to.

"He was quite a showman. He had a sense of humor on stage," Kamakahi said.

"His nickname was Animal because he looked so mean and vicious, but he was actually gentle as a lamb," he added.

Keale was also best known for his ukulele style as a member of Sons of Hawaii.

Visitation will take place on Monday from 4:30 to 9 p.m. at Kawaiahao Church. Services will be from 6 to 7 p.m. On May 4 a musical celebration in remembrance of Keale will take place at noon at the Kuhio Beach Hula Mound. A ceremony will be held at sunset while his ashes are scattered at sea.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Keale's memory can be made to the Moe Keale Fund for the American Heart Association.

He is survived by his wife Carol; son Nalani; sister Momi Mix; Niihau Ohana; hanai sisters Martha Noyles, Loke Lyu and Kauhane Lee; godson Kekoaokekoolau Lyu; and nieces and nephews.

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