



NAINOA THOMPSON **President** **Polynesian Voyaging Society**



Nainoa Thompson was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. He has been affiliated with the Polynesian Voyaging Society since 1975, when he sailed from Tahiti to Hawaii aboard the Hokule'a. In 1980, he became the first Hawaiian in more than six hundred years to navigate a voyaging canoe from Hawaii to Tahiti without the use of navigational instruments. Since that time, he has participated in virtually every long distance voyage of Hokule'a, serving as navigator on voyages to Tahiti, the Cook Islands, Aotearoa, Tonga, Samoa, and the Marquesas.

Nainoa is a graduate of Punahou School and the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He is licensed as a U.S. Merchant Marine Officer Master, and certified as an advanced diver and as a commercial pilot SEL, MEL.

He is currently President of the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

The 1992 Voyage to Ra'iatea and Rarotonga, called No Na Mamo, For the Children, was designed to train a new generation of voyagers to sail Hokule'a, to share the knowledge and values of voyaging with students in Hawai'i and to celebrate the revival of canoe building and traditional navigation throughout the Pacific with a visit to the Sixth Pacific Arts Festival held that year in Rarotonga. On each of the four legs of the voyage, Hokule'a had new navigators to guide her. In addition to training new navigators and crew members, PVS reached out to thousands of school children in Hawai'i through a long-distance education program. During the voyage students tracked the canoe on nautical charts, learned about their Pacific world, and used the canoe and its limited supply of food, water, and space, to explore issues of survival, sustainability, and teamwork. On the voyage back to Hawai'i, the crew of the canoe contacted the crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia flying overhead and shuttle astronaut Lacy Veach, a Hawai'i native. The two vessels participated in conversations with students in Hawai'i about the importance of exploration.

The Hokule'a embarked on its historic, 3 year, Malama Honua voyage, May 2014 and returned to Hawaii in June 2017. The seed for Hōkūle'a's World Wide Voyage was planted one night after the 1992 voyage to Rarotonga in the Cook Islands. While Nainoa Thompson was sailing home on Hōkūle'a, he had spoken via satellite phone with, Lacy Veach, a NASA astronaut who was orbiting the earth on the space shuttle *Columbia*. Lacy grew up in Hawai'i and went to school with Nainoa. Nainoa invited Lacy and two other astronauts to join the Hōkūle'a crew on the last leg of the 1992 voyage, from Moloka'i to O'ahu.

Later, over the Thompson kitchen table, Nainoa's father, Pinky Thompson, and Lacy shared their visions of Hawai'i with each other.

Nainoa remembers Lacy's vision: "Lacy was asleep, stuck to the wall with Velcro, when another astronaut woke him up. 'Come and look out the window. We're passing over Hawai'i,' he said. Lacy looked out the porthole of the shuttle. The sight of the islands took his breath away." He saw the islands and the planet in one vision – that planet earth was just an island like Hawai'i, in an ocean of space, and that we needed to take care of them both if the planet was to remain a life-giving home for humanity.

