

WEEKEND SATURDAY EDITION



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SATURDAY EDITION

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By George F. Lee, Star-Bulletin

Cha Thompson performed for the national convention of American Mothers Inc. at Washington Place in April.

Mother of Year remains active, irrepressible

**Cha Thompson, leading a life
of volunteering and work, plans
a party Nov. 13 for her finale**

[Candidates sought for 2000](#)

By Mary Adamski
Star-Bulletin



Now that Cha Thompson has worn the Hawaii Mother of the Year title all year, she has become a sedate, soft-spoken, always impeccably turned-out mother and grandmother modeled on the maternal titleholders she's met along the way.

Not!

"They all talk soft and I talk loud; they didn't raise 12 kids and slap their heads when they didn't behave!" That's the irrepressible Kalihi girl's view of her year as spokeswoman for American Mothers Inc., sponsor of Mother's Day and the National Mother of the Year competition.

Thompson plans a Nov. 13 party for kids young and old as her public motherhood finale. Meanwhile, the Hawaii Association of American Mothers is seeking candidates for her successor.

Thompson, 53, and her husband, Jack, raised their own four children and eight other youngsters. They opened their home and hearts to children sent for education from Samoa and Tokelau -- Jack's roots -- and children from troubled families "who had no place to go." Five of the Thompson brood still live at home, and now there are three grandsons in the family circle.

One of the memories other states' mothers took away from the national group's convention here in April was of the graceful hula and island-style glamour of the dancer who holds the Hawaii title.

"I still correspond with a lot of them. They had such awesome, courageous stories. ... You can't believe what a mother can do," said Thompson. Her license plates proclaim her "Kalihi" roots, and her shorts and slippers worn for a Spam breakfast at Zippy's belie the hula lady glamour.

"I don't believe there's a perfect mother," said Thompson, who balances her role as a mother with a busy life. As partner in Tihati Productions, which employs 900 people, she choreographs and teaches dances for the Polynesian revue performed here, with road trips to the mainland and Asia.

Then there's her service on the Honolulu Police Commission and being a Hawaiian consultant to "Baywatch Hawaii," which led to a speaking part on an episode to air Nov. 15.

Dominating the calendar of this busy year, though, have been hours devoted to speaking and volunteering for any organization that asks her to share the message that's behind the title.

"American Mothers keeps the family in the forefront. It's one of the few places you can admit you know God," Thompson said.

But, she noted with a laugh, the questions after her speeches often turn to son Afatia, a running back and starter on the University of Hawaii football team. It's a fan club with Ma and Pa at the top of the list. "I'm thrilled at (coach) June Jones; he's building gentlemen. I'm going to cook my Hawaiian stew for him one of these days."

The states' mothers of the year are required to sponsor a community project during their reign.

It won't surprise anyone who knows Thompson to hear that she plans a party for her grand finale. She's bringing Tihati Productions' whole array of Hyper Activities -- those inflated monster-size bouncy rides and games that highlight birthday parties and conventions these days -- and a gang of company volunteers to help.

She's sending invitations to organizations for disadvantaged children. But, she said, the Nov. 13 party at Ala Moana Park will be open to any child who wants to come, no matter how old.

Don't look for "muthah" all dolled up on a stage, though. She'll be down in the trenches, dishing out the food, the advice, the support and the praise. "It's what I do."

Candidates sought for 2000

American Mothers Inc. is seeking candidates for Hawaii Mother of the Year 2000.

The deadline for nominations is Oct. 31. Nominations may be submitted by churches, clubs and other organizations.

Women with natural or adopted children are eligible for nomination. Judges weigh their success as a mother, their involvement in their community and church, as well as contributions their children have made to society.

Applications also are sought for a representative in the Mother of Young Children category.

Applicants must submit a portfolio and will be interviewed by judges. The competition does not involve a pageant.

The state winners in both categories will be announced in February. The winners will be candidates for American Mother of the Year.

Nomination information is available from Karen Miller of the search committee at 293-2370.

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