

Owana Salazar cites 1844 list of 'eligibles'

By Jon Yoshishige
Advertiser Staff Writer

Princess Elizabeth Kekaaniau Laanui was only 10 when King Kamehameha III in 1844 declared her among the *ali'i* eligible for the kingdom's throne, her descendants say.

She was one of the first 16 students of the Royal School, a Honolulu boarding school reserved for children of select *ali'i* (ranking royalty).

Laanui was a great-grandniece of Kamehameha I, who conquered and united six of the eight main Hawaiian Islands by 1795, creating the Kingdom of Hawaii. The last two islands, Kauai and Niihau, joined the kingdom in 1810, with Kamehameha I as the undisputed ruler.

Her family says Laanui — who was childless — had just one successor: her only brother's only child, Princess Theresa Owana Kaohelani.

And today, Princess Theresa's great-granddaughter, Owana Kaohelani Salazar, says her family can trace the line of royal succession to themselves.

Succession would have reverted to Royal School's "pool of eligibles" because Princess Kaiulani, the heir apparent to Hawaii's last monarch, died without children, said Salazar, 40. And because Laanui was the last survivor of the school's original 16 students, her descendants believe the throne would have gone to her.

"If they follow the rule of law, Elizabeth (Laanui) was



Owana Kaohelani Salazar

next in the line of succession," said Salazar's cousin, E. Kalamoku Miller.

Laanui was declared eligible for the throne by Kamehameha III's "order in council," an order a king makes on advice of the National Assembly, Miller explained.

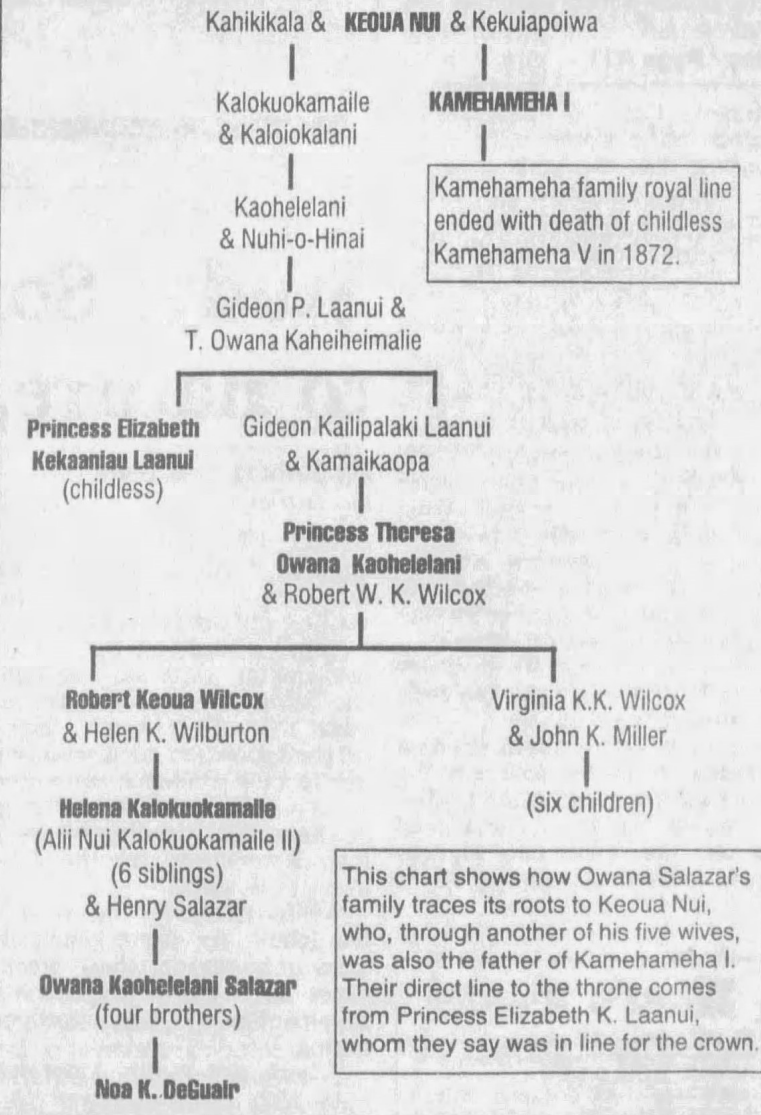
Salazar said their family's claim started during Laanui's lifetime — she died in 1928.

"We are all passing the torch from one generation to the next," she said. "It's based on law, not opinion."

Princess Theresa married Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox, and they had a son and daughter. Their son, Robert Keoua Wilcox, married Helen Kaleipuanani Wilburton. The eldest of their six children was Helena Kalokuokamaile Wilcox — Owana Salazar's mother.

Because of her heritage, the Hawaiian sovereignty group Ka Lahui Hawai'i recognized Helena as *Ali'i Nui* (Paramount Chief) Kalokuokamaile II at its first constitutional convention

Salazar family tree



in 1987.

Ka Lahui Hawai'i claims to have more than 20,000 citizens and has what it says is a democratic constitution that identifies four branches of government: legislative, executive, judicial and *ali'i nui*.

Ka Lahui's constitution provides for elected leadership — except for its *ali'i nui* branch. That branch is responsible for matters relating to culture, tradition and protocol.

The constitution says the *ali'i nui* may choose a successor from among her children or Ka Lahui's Ali'i Council.

Before she died in 1988, Kalokuokamaile II named Owana Salazar's son — Noa K. DeGuair — her successor, Kalokuokamaile III. She also named Salazar *kuhina nui*, or regent, to oversee the office of *ali'i nui* until DeGuair is 21 "or is prepared" to assume the office.

DeGuair is now 12.