Iakina Adventist Academy, American Samoa, 2020.

Photo courtesy of Lupe Tapuai.

# Iakina Adventist Academy, American Samoa

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Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek, Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist*, the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

Iakina Adventist Academy is located in Pago Pago, American Samoa. It offers classes in all levels of elementary and secondary education from kindergarten to grade 12. It has 19 teaching staff. It is administered through the American Samoa District Office, which is attached to the Trans Pacific Union Mission.

## History of the School

In 1958 a Tongan teacher, Hanui, began an elementary school of grades 1 through 4 at Satala on Tutuila Island. It was simply called the Seventh-day Adventist School.[1] Soon after its opening, early in 1959, a hurricane badly damaged the building, and the government declared it could not be reopened. Donations, however, enabled repairs to be done, and soon it was fully functional again. Additional grades were gradually added.[2]

By 1965 the school was overcrowded, with one hundred students in the building that was also utilized as the church. It was located high on a ridge overlooking Pago Pago. Youngsters struggled to climb the steep track to attend, especially in wet weather. At the time another Tongan, Henry Moala, was the head teacher, assisted by Talafulu Tesese, daughter of the district director of the American Samoa Mission.[3]

A major advance took place in November 1975 when a new school building was opened in the south of the island at Ili'ili, Tafuna, near the international airport. Aged matriarch Malama and Chief Aumavae, local church members, had agreed for the upper school, grades 5 through 8, to be relocated to their property. Clem Long of Sydney designed a solid structure of three rooms, and Dr. and Mrs. Harold Lawson of Hawaii donated generously to the project. These upper levels of the school numbered sixty students at the time of relocation.[4] The teachers who moved with the older students were Iosua Malaga and Mrs. Falesoa Puni. Aumavae's family had named the left-hand side of their land Poasa (Samoan for Boaz) and the right-hand side Iakina (Samoan for Jachin). These were the names of the twin bronze pillars of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:21). The school was built on the right-hand side of the property therefore named Iakina Seventh-day Adventist School. In the following year, 1976, Bruce Myers of New Zealand was appointed principal.[5]

The lower school, grades 1 to 4, transferred from Satala to Ili'ili in 1986, making it a more compact institution. Increasing numbers in the elementary levels and the flow on into academy levels prompted a push for general upgrading of the institution. This was achieved in the early 2000s and the name changed to Iakina Adventist Academy.[6] The General Conference education report for 2007 listed the school with 232 students and 23 teachers.[7] Strangely, the academy has never been acknowledged in the *SDA Yearbooks*.

The institution is unique within the South Pacific Division because it functions from September through June, following the American timetable. Its teachers have been almost entirely drawn from the local membership in order to facilitate American idioms, pronunciation, and spelling. The current enrollment (2018/2019) stands at 280.[8]

SOURCES

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## NOTES

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5. Afa'ese, 26.
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