

**Duke Kahanamoku:**

**Cultural Icon**



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## A Living Legend Passes

Dark and angry storm clouds collected over Waikiki threatening rain over the thousands of aching hearts gathered on the beach in front of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Beachboys, tourists, friends and family came with canoes, surfboards and boats to say goodbye to Hawaii's favorite son, Duke Paoa Kahanamoku.

It was January of 1968, five days after Duke Kahanamoku died of a heart attack at age 77. The first half of the funeral service was held at St. Andrews Episcopal Cathedral. Duke's good friend, entertainer Author Godfrey gave the eulogy. He outlined Duke's magnificent career and expressed his own love for Duke. He said, "Duke gave these islands a new dimension. He was a godlike creature in a way and yet a mischievous boy at heart. As big and strong as he was, he was as gentle as a baby."<sup>1</sup> Once the church services were complete, a motorcade made its way to Waikiki Beach to say goodbye and scatter his ashes.

The beach, in front of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, was where Duke could have been found most and was where he surfed, paddled, swam, played ukulele and met Nadine, his wife. Reverend Abraham K. Akaka spoke to the thousands on the beach and wading in the ocean. The air was heavy with sorrow and love for Duke, as he said; "Duke Kahanamoku represented the ali'i nobility in the highest sense- concern for others, humility in victory, courage in adversity, good sportsmanship in defeat. He had a quality of life we are all challenged and inspired to emulate."<sup>2</sup> The beachboys sang their farewell song "Aloha Oe" and the shoreline of people began to weep. Duke's ashes were paddled out to sea by an armada of outrigger canoes and surfers.

Nadine Kahanamoku scattered his ashes into the sea. The mourners in the canoes, boats and on surfboards threw flowers and flower leis for Duke. Soon the ocean was a blanket of flowers and Reverend Akaka spoke amongst the tears, "Paoa was a man of aloha. God gave him to us as a gift from the sea, and now we give him back from whence he came."<sup>3</sup>

A rainbow formed over the island, as the canoes made their way back to the beach.

### **Recognition of Influence**

When a person dies, there is often an outpouring of love and recognition of accomplishments. This started a bit premature for Duke Kahanamoku. Perhaps his health problems in his later years stirred emotion and memories in people, but in his last few years of life Duke was honored in several different capacities. Be it his birthday events or surf contests, Hawaii showed Duke how important he was to the people and the state. Duke was a humble person, who always attended the events and graciously met with people, but once things settled and he sat down, he was known to fall asleep.<sup>4</sup> In 1965, Duke became a charter member of the International Swimming Hall of Fame and in 1966; he became the number one charter member of the Surfing Hall of Fame. At the induction ceremony, a young surfer reached up and touched Duke gingerly on the arm. Duke looked down at him and the boy said he was sorry and, "I just wanted to touch you".<sup>5</sup> I am sure that this thoroughly embarrassed Duke, but it speaks to greatness of his influence.

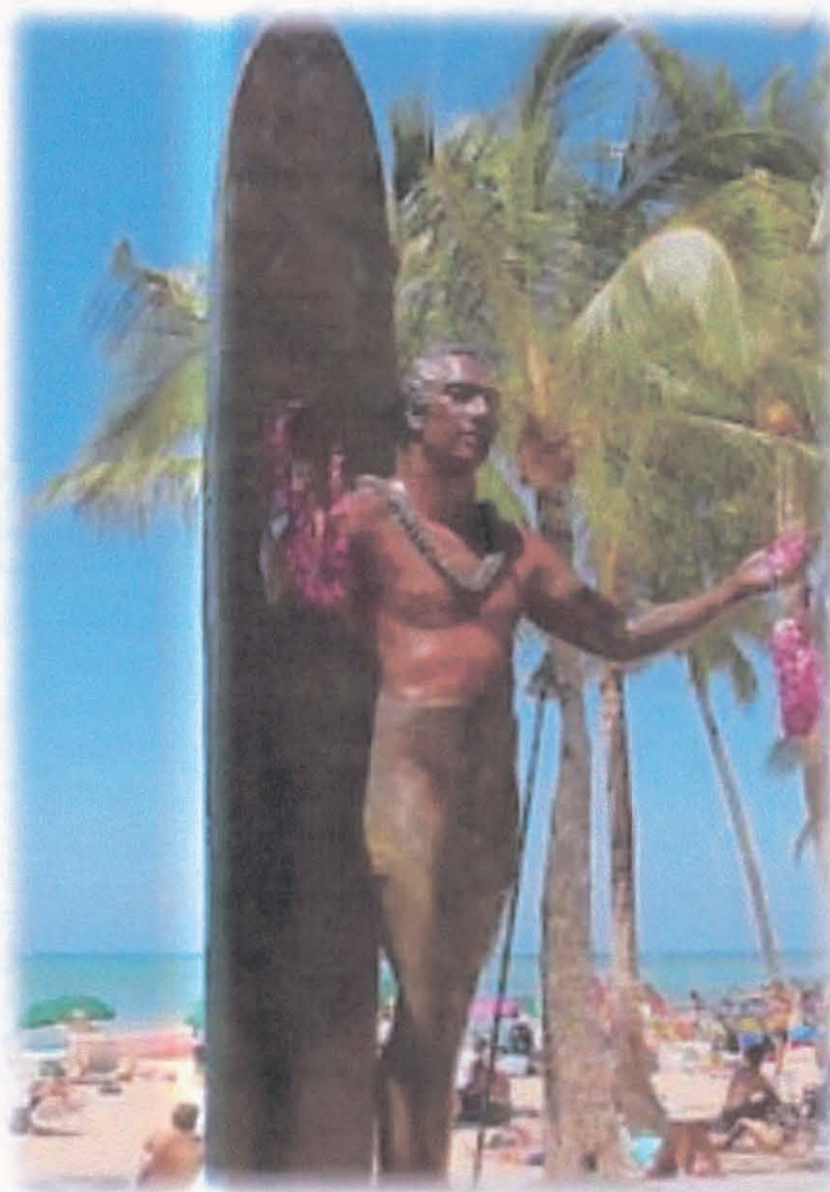


At the time of Duke's death, January 22, 1968, the Honolulu Advertiser had this to say:

The only question for history is how big Duke's legend will become...Some of the things bearing his name include a scholarship foundation, a beach, a swimming pool at the university, an annual regatta, a restaurant and a nightspot, a line of sportswear, a music and recording company, ukuleles, surfboards, a surfing club, and an international surfing championship.

But far more important is perpetuating Duke's spirit-the friendly, modest young Hawaiian boy whose real accomplishments won the respect of the world, the older man who carried his legend with modest dignity. These are goals all might seek.

Duke must always be a part of Hawaii... We must never lose him in spirit later.<sup>6</sup>



*Duke Statue, Waikiki Beach Hawaii*

*Photo: Katie Wright*

## **Duke Kahanamoku: Hawaiian Cultural Icon**

“A cultural icon is a famous individual who has transcended ‘mere’ celebrity to come to represent a given zeitgeist to a sizeable part of the world. As such, a cultural icon is not simply a famous face but a complex, multi-layered personage who reflects the conflicts and contradictions of his or her time.”<sup>7</sup>

The above definition intrigued me, what is the necessity of this? Why do we need cultural icons? What happens during the life of a person that would propel them into iconic status? This quote from Time Magazine suggests an answer to who a cultural icon is, “People who articulate the longings of the... years, exemplifying courage, selflessness, exuberance, superhuman ability and amazing grace.”<sup>8</sup> Magazines, such as Time Magazine, are often printing who they feel the cultural icons are of the United States and the world. What is the formula and do they always get it right? I believe the answer also lies in the idea of immortality, “Crystallize an epoch in an individual and you offer individuals the hope of transcending their epoch.”<sup>9</sup>

My focus will be on people as icons and in particular a Hawaiian man named Duke Kahanamoku. His name, in many different areas of water sports and the world, is synonymous with greatness. Duke Kahanamoku died in 1968, but is remembered and celebrated the world over, why? I believe his life followed a pattern that others, we call icons have also followed. I based my research on the idea of icon, but the word hero came hand-in-hand with my cultural icon study. While no one thus far, to my knowledge, has created a pattern of the ideal traits which cultural icons carry, many have written about heroes. Such as a paper written about Duke

Kahanamoku for a conference entitled “Heroes: East and West” in the summer of 1974. I have taken from this paper the idea of hero and specific traits, which turn a mere mortal into a hero. I then included my other research on icons and deduced a process or paradigm in which our cultural icons have followed. The order is as follows: I. Advancement of Situation, II. Champion, III. Hero, IV. Magnetism, V. Challenged, VI. Citizen of the World, VII. Life Beyond Death and VIII. An Unintentional Legacy. This order is not necessarily specific, but each is essential. For the purposes of this paper, I will be addressing some of the traits together. I will first cover Advancement of Situation, then combine Champion and Hero. Next I will combine Magnetism and Citizen of the World, followed by Challenged. I will then cover the rest of Life Beyond Death, which was briefly introduced at the beginning of this paper. The last chapter of this paper will cover Unintentional Legacy, I believe there are certain representations and ideas of Hawaii that have been left behind after Duke’s passing that he may not have intended to happen. I have chosen Duke Kahanamoku because he is the perfect paragon of cultural icon.

### **Advancement of Situation**

Waldo Dunn, an English biographer wrote, “to be born obscure and die famous has been described as the acme of human felicity.”<sup>10</sup> Humble beginnings are common themes among our heroes and icons. It seems a basic characteristic of human beings, especially within the United States, to try and advance one’s position in life. The fairy tales and stories tell us when we are children that we can be anything we choose to be. This does not have to be with wealth in monetary terms, but it could be the idea of fame and meaning something to the general public, that motivates individuals to pursue a better life.

Duke Kahanamoku was born to Julia Paoa and Duke Halapu Kahanamoku in August of 1890. They lived in an area of Waikiki called Kalia, were surrounded by family and had the ocean for their backyard. Duke was the eldest of nine children and carried, in Hawaiian tradition, the blessings of the ancestors.<sup>11</sup> In Duke's case, his ancestors on his mother's side were the Paoa's, a celebrated ancestry throughout Polynesia for their excellent skills as navigators.<sup>12</sup> Duke found being in the water a natural place for him and remembers being confident in the ocean by the age of four.

The Kahanamokus did not have much, but they had each other.<sup>13</sup> The family was extremely close knit and held deep moral values. After Duke's passing, the Kahanamoku family book was found and amongst other things, a poem inside told of Duke Halapu's spiritual beliefs, which fed his family.

*Alone With God*

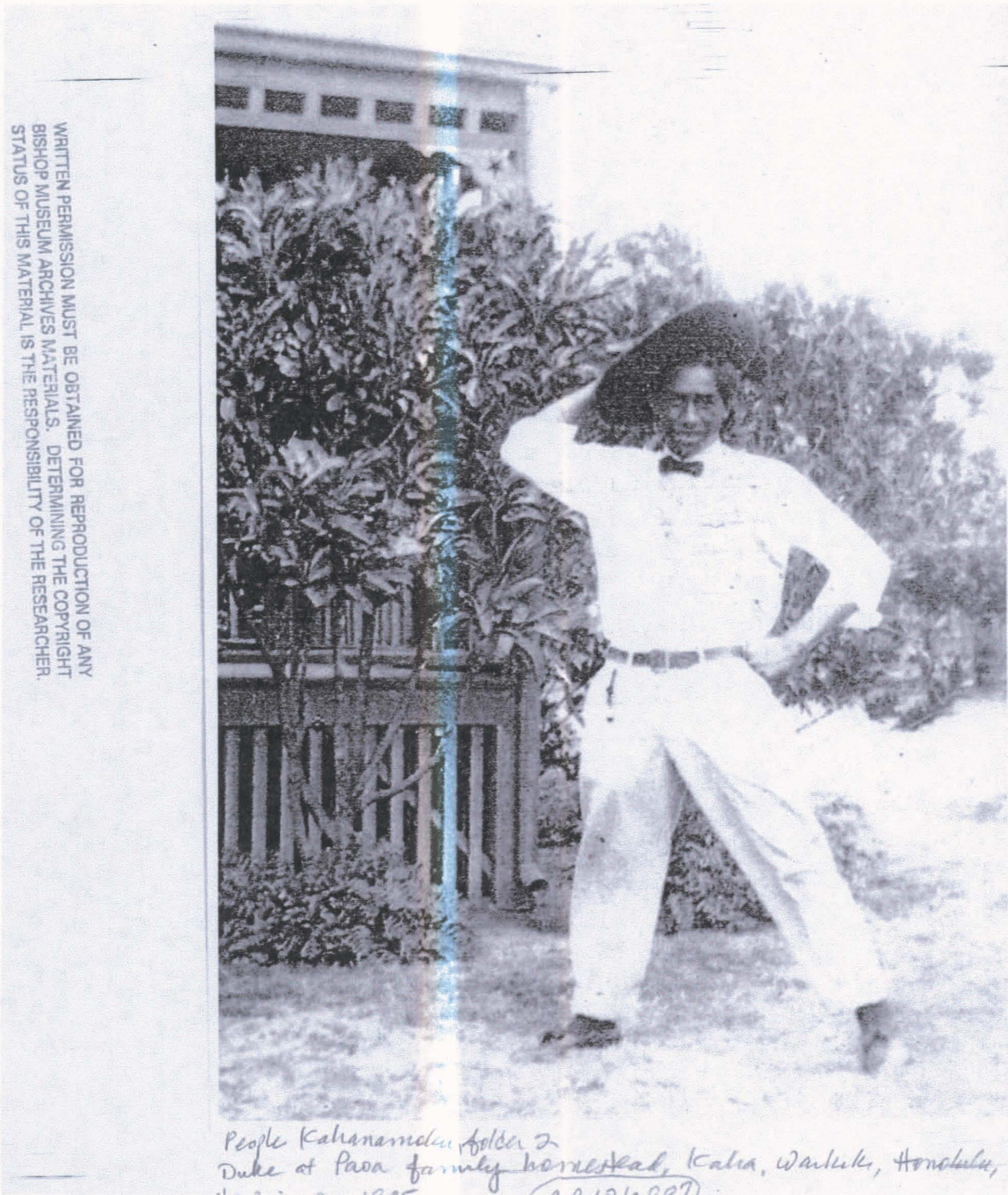
*Alone with God! No sound to mar the stillness, no echo of the worlds  
tumultuous din. The strife and turmoil for a time forgotten. While his sweet,  
changeless peace abides within.*

*Alone with God! I feel his loving presence, it soothes my spirit, calm my  
restless hurt. I listen for his voice to break the silence and heavenly lessons to my  
soul impart.*

*Alone with God! And yet I am not lonely. Beneath me are his everlasting  
arms; I lean upon his strength and trust his mercy. No worry frets me and no ill  
alarms.<sup>14</sup>*



The eldest son had great responsibility and was depended upon to help feed and take care of the family. He did not finish all his schooling in order to make money to help his family.



Duke at home in Kalia-1905

Photo: Bishop Museum Archives



Duke found his success in the ocean, do When we consider Duke Kahanamoku as the fairy tale hero, we do not concentrate on him as the offspring of a family with direct ties to the alii, the Hawaiian aristocracy, rather we see him as an elder son of a family of limited means, a beach boy without any higher education and the son of a mother who spoke very little English.<sup>15</sup>

Duke found his success in the ocean, doing the things he loved to do. The first glimpse of Duke's future came when a local Honolulu attorney, William Rawlins, saw Duke swimming in Waikiki and encouraged him to swim in an Amateur Athletic Union swim meet at the Alakea Slip. Duke swam and won, not only did he win, but he also beat the world record in the 100-yard open water freestyle race. The officials in New York, at the head of the AAU, did not believe it. They reportedly said, "What are you using for stop watches? Alarm clocks?"<sup>16</sup> They wanted to see it for their own eyes and asked Duke to swim on the mainland (the continental United States) to prove his speed.

At this point, Duke was already a well-known surfer amongst those in Waikiki. The "hau tree surfers"<sup>17</sup> were Duke's main group of friends and family outside of Kalia. They met under a hau tree in Waikiki and discussed all the nuances of surfing. They played ukulele and they talked story. Beach clubs began to form in the early 1900's in order to have surfboard storage, showers and other equipment stored. Duke was invited to join Outrigger Canoe Club with the fees waved, but he chose to stay with his buddies until around 1920 when he officially joined Outrigger Canoe Club and proceeded to help make them a club of talented athletes that they continue to be today. In his book, World of Surfing, Duke refers to the start of the club, "today's swank and

renowned Outrigger Canoe Club actually began as a tumble down grass shack purchased from the local zoo.”<sup>18</sup>

The ‘hau tree surfers’ officially became a club in 1908 and named themselves the Hui Nalu. They wanted to compete with other swimmers, surfers and paddlers (outrigger canoe paddlers), but could not afford the initiation fees to the other beach clubs, like Outrigger Canoe Club. Duke spoke of Hui Nalu, “It was a poor man’s club, but it was made up of dedicated surfers.”<sup>19</sup> Through interviews with family friends and biographers of Duke I learned that Duke firmly believed in being a gentleman. He did not drink, smoke or fight. He felt these things would not help him become a better athlete and chose not to participate in them. He encouraged his friends in this manner as well and this decision lasted his whole life.



*Duke at the Alakea Slip.*

*Photo: Bishop Museum Archives*

## **Champion and Hero**

A cultural icon does not appear out of the blue. A champion and hero, not a celebrity, must first be born. That is to say, the world must see superhuman ability that they admire or envy before cheering and shouting someone's name. Sandy Hall, one of Duke's primary biographers, felt that there is a difference between being a celebrity and being famous. She feels that to become a celebrity one does not need any special talent or skill; but to become famous, a person must have extraordinary skills.<sup>20</sup> Sigmund Freud wrote, "We know that in the mass of mankind there is a powerful need for an authority who can be admired."<sup>21</sup> The next section discusses how Duke became that authority.

"A true hero has more than one face."<sup>22</sup> Duke Kahanamoku became a hero and champion, in several different ways. His swimming brilliance captured the world first; his surfing exhibitions held around the world, led him to be the 'Father of Modern and International Surfing'; his heroic rescues, such as in Corona Del Mar and several other lesser known rescues, introduced new lifesaving techniques for emergency workers around the world; his job as Sheriff of Honolulu for thirteen terms displayed dedication to the people of the Hawaiian islands; and Duke just being himself, taught the world grace, dignity and Hawaiian style.

Duke's splash onto the National swimming scene came in 1911 when he broke a world record at a swim meet in Honolulu Harbor. A group of Honolulu businessmen, spearheaded by attorney Bill Rawlins, raised the money for Duke and a couple of others to go and compete on the mainland. He visited Pittsburg, Pennsylvania and Chicago, Illinois. The controversy, over whether Duke could really go as fast as he did in Hawaii, created newspaper stories and soon Duke and the other Hawaiian team members were posing for photographs. This created a bigger draw than usual at the swim meets. Everyone wanted to see the Hawaiian who 'supposedly'



broke a world record. The cold water took some getting used to, but soon he astonished the crowds with his 'Kahanamoku Kick'<sup>23</sup> and incredible times. A reporter from the New York World wrote that, "Duke was unconcerned with the start and it was fully two seconds before he went after the field. Once in the water, he quickly overhauled his opponents."<sup>24</sup> These races qualified him for the United States Olympic Team for the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games.

The Olympic games took Duke even farther from home as he continued his travels from the mainland to Europe. He wrote a letter to his father, which gives insight into his attitude aboard the Red Star Liner *Finland*,

Here at sea. Having a good time, and all well aboard. Rained this morning quite a lot, but it's over now. Have been swimming in the little tank (aboard). Some traveling, Daddy! Bought a little camera in New York. Hope results will be good throughout. Fine bunch of athletes. Sang *Aloha Oi* for Colonel Thompson (a millionaire) last night on board. He appreciated it very much and shook hands with us. The boys also appreciated my singing. Aloha nui and regards to the boys. Duke<sup>25</sup>

Duke also wrote back to the local newspaper, the Honolulu Advertiser, "sincere and grateful thanks to everybody for the financial assistance and encouragement by which I am enabled to take part in the great Olympic Games," he pledged, "to put forth my best efforts to win and add to the glory of the United State and Hawaii."<sup>26</sup> He kept up his correspondence with Honolulu throughout his life and travels. Always showing gratitude to the ones who have helped him along the way.

Once in Stockholm, Duke competed in the 100 freestyle and tied the world record in the preliminaries. During the final, "he was so far ahead that at the halfway point he was able to

look back and survey the field. Despite this pause he won by two metres.”<sup>27</sup> He also won a silver medal on the relay team. Perhaps another world record could have been broken here, but Duke tended to only swim fast enough to win. He never wished to embarrass his opponents.<sup>28</sup>

When King Gustof of Sweden, motioned to Duke during the closing ceremonies to come and join him in the royal box, “Duke at that moment entered into his kingdom, beginning his reign as hero.”<sup>29</sup> He was presented to the Queen and the royal family. The crowd went nuts and Duke was teary-eyed.<sup>30</sup> An Olympic observer commented, “Six feet two... with the rich features of a high Polynesian type. All in all, a handsome specimen of Hawaiian manhood – easy, nonchalant, modest and inspiring friendship.”<sup>31</sup> This is the first international press about Duke’s charisma and his physical body without discussing athletics. From this point on, Duke would not travel without mention of his physique and his charm. Duke’s body played a large role in his popularity.

The 1912 Olympics was the beginning of Dukes adventures around Europe, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. He gave swimming and surfing demonstrations everywhere he was asked and enjoyed thrilling crowds of people with his talents. “His magical feats filled the minds of cheering fans. Kahanamoku was wined, dined, and feted by royalty, celebrities, and sports aficionados wherever he went.”<sup>32</sup>

Newspapers in all the cities he visited, and even the nearby cities, wrote articles and published pictures of the Hawaiian. The Long Beach Press published articles whenever he was in California. In July of 1913, they wrote about Duke and nine other Hawaiian swimmers in town to give demonstrations, of Duke they wrote, “He is a remarkable athlete and called forth the admiration of a large audience when he tied the world’s fifty-yard mark last night.”<sup>33</sup> The next day another article was published about Duke in the Daily Telegram, which remarked, “The

great Hawaiian swimmer and six members of the Hawaiian team spent several hours in Long Beach yesterday. They couldn't resist the surf and the Duke gave a thrilling exhibition of surfboard riding. Thousands of people enjoyed watching him."<sup>34</sup>

Duke was invited to Australia in November of 1914 to demonstrate his swimming techniques and compete in a few races. While traveling, Duke noticed the excellent surfing conditions in Australia. The races were a month away and Duke decided to build a surfboard and catch a few waves. He chose Freshwater Beach for his demonstration; the word got out and thousands came down to the beach to watch. Duke later spoke of the event, "I must of put on a show that trapped their fancy, for the crowds on shore applauded me long and loud. There had been no way of knowing that they would go for it in the manner in which they did...The Aussies became instant converts."<sup>35</sup>

After Dukes long trip to Australia, he went on to visit New Zealand where he was welcomed with open arms. He gave swimming exhibitions, where he broke his own world record, and he also demonstrated surfing. He met with the press, dignitaries and the Maori people. A newspaper wrote, "Duke Kahanamoku would pass muster as a Maori, a rather big handsome Maori, with all the outward and visible qualities of the Native Islander. Only he comes from a Little White Pearl of the North Pacific, the Islands of Hawaii, which to him is home."<sup>36</sup> Here again is evidence of reference to body and specifically his body being of islander form. Some may argue this is a way of giving clear description, but perhaps this also assisted in his notoriety

The 1916 Olympics were cancelled due to the war. Duke was getting ready to enlist when the Red Cross asked Duke and other swimmers from around the United States to go on

tour. They raised money for U.S. war bonds by giving swimming exhibitions. In Duke's spare time on tour, you could find him knitting sweaters for the soldiers in Europe. The tour ended in Washington D.C. Duke did not know what to do with his life, in terms of career, and thought he would enlist in the Air Corps. While waiting to receive an assignment, he fell horribly sick with pneumonia. The hospitals were packed with wounded soldiers and Duke was left in a bed alone with nothing but a few crackers and a little water for days. A close friend from Hawaii, Bernyce Smith, was in town and tracked him down. She found him near death. She nursed him back to health and he returned to the islands a few months later.<sup>37</sup>

The war ended and the 1920 Olympic Games were on the horizon. People were muttering that Duke would not be able to be competitive. They thought he was too old to race and should go ahead and retire. A Honolulu columnist named Red McQueen remembered, "When the 1920 games at Antwerp, Belgium rolled around, many thought that Duke at 30 was a bit too old to try out for the American team. But at the behest of Dad Center he whipped back into shape and defended his Olympic crown in a new world record time."<sup>38</sup> It was not until the 1924 Olympic games did Johnny Weismuller dethrone Duke. After winning the silver medal at 34 years old, Duke joked, "it took Tarzan to beat me."<sup>39</sup> Duke's brother Sam took the bronze in the race. Duke and Weismuller became lifelong friends after the Olympics and had running jokes about who was a better athlete.

In the book, Name, Hero, Icon, the author points out that heroes and icons are "individuals worthy of praise, emulation and worship."<sup>40</sup> All in all, Duke participated in four Olympics, three for swimming and one as a member of the water polo team. He won three gold medals, a silver medal and a bronze medal. His Olympic glory spanned 20 years, a feat that is unheard of in the modern Olympic Games. During that time, he introduced surfing to the world



and thus became “the unofficial ambassador for the sport and taught eager surfers from Malibu, California to Atlantic City, New Jersey and on around the world.”<sup>41</sup> He performed a rescue at Corona Del Mar, in which he saved eight lives and introduced the surfboard as a rescue device.<sup>42</sup>

The essay Heroes: East and West tell us, “the hero has found it necessary to attain that which only few can attain.”<sup>43</sup> Duke has done this through all his incredible accomplishments. The champion and hero at this point may choose the job of role model. Charles Barkley, an NBA basketball star, once was quoted saying, “I am not a role model!”<sup>44</sup> I feel that this is where star and cultural icon make a separation. I believe it is a matter of choice the champion and hero can make to be on the path to becoming an icon or just to be a good athlete. In order to become an icon, the hero must be willing to go above and beyond. The person must be willing to even be a hero before icon. Some people who do amazing and fantastic things choose against the public wishes and refuse to become a hero and thus making it impossible to be lifted to iconic status. It could be argued that this is a moral decision, and not a decision about leaving a legacy. Perhaps some would rather not have the spotlight in that manner. So, I believe it is a choice and one Duke was aware of on some level. We do know that Duke enjoyed teaching and helping people. Around 1963, Duke Kahanamoku’s trophies were placed in the foyer of Honolulu City Hall as a reminder to Hawaii’s youth that anything is possible.



*Duke's Trophies on display at Bishop Museum Annex*

*Photo: Katie Wright*

### **Magnetism and Citizen of the World**

“The hero is generated by the needs of ordinary mortals.”<sup>45</sup> What did the different groups of people in Hawaii need during Duke’s rise? What did the world need? What does Duke possess that helped fill the needs of society? The champion and hero, in order to become an icon, must be a role model and personify the good of the community. In the essay, *Heroes: East and West*, they quote Jung saying, “the hero personifies life force beyond the limits of our consciousness.”<sup>46</sup>

At the time of Duke’s rise to success, Hawaii’s political status was on shaky ground. The islands had recently, 1898, been formed into a territory without the consent of all the citizens. And what did the title, Territory of the United States, mean? In *Name, Hero, Icon*, the author refers to this, “any group instinctively longs for their own uniqueness.”<sup>47</sup> A new identity was

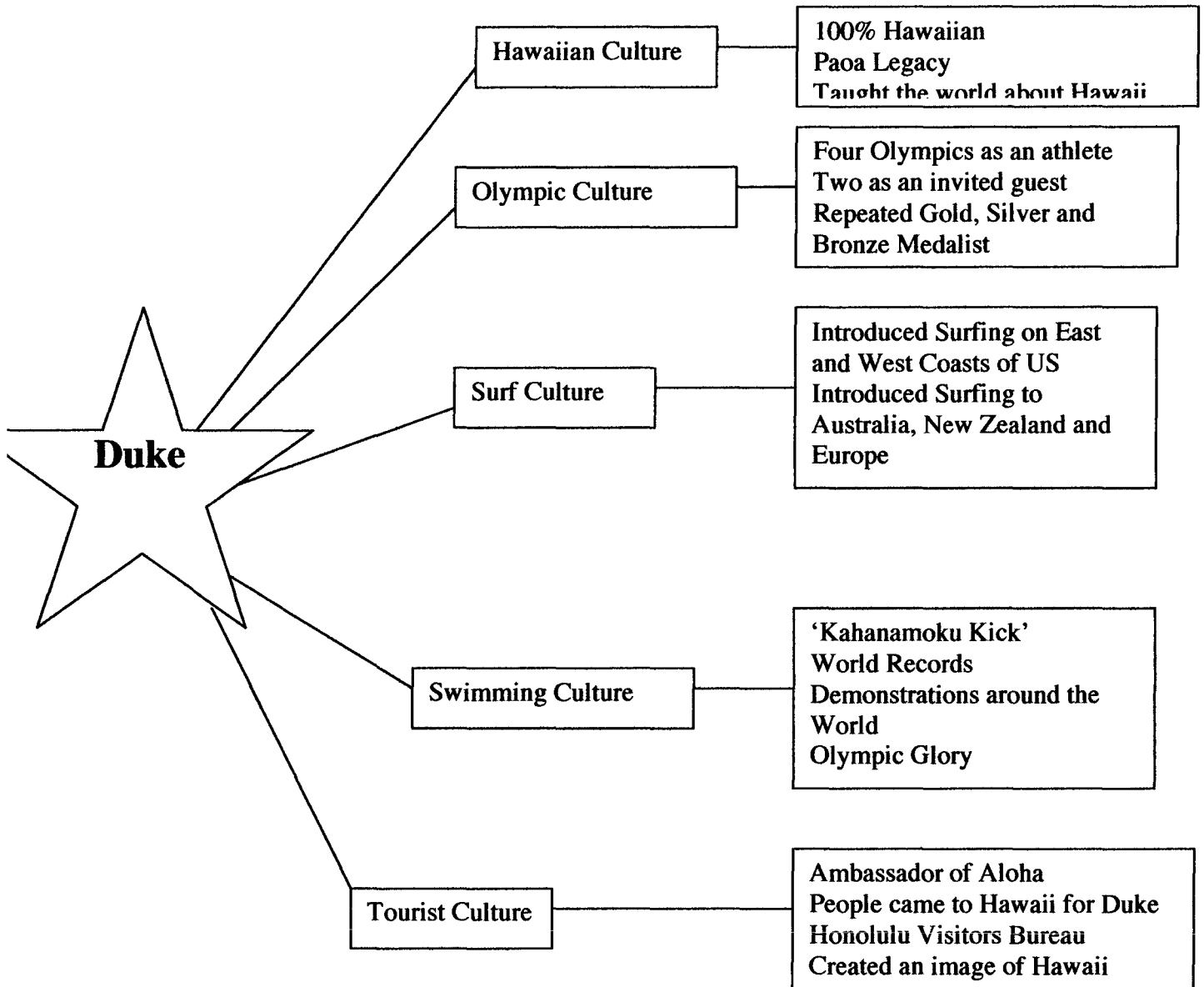
being formed for Hawaii and perhaps, promoting and believing in Duke was a way to unite several groups of people who wanted a say in that identity.

“The person... has been world famous since his youth...From that first day of international fame many years ago to this day, he has conducted himself in a manner so warm, so honest and so completely Hawaiian that he has won fame for all of us.”<sup>48</sup> This was said during an awards ceremony at the Oahu Country Club where they honored Duke for sharing Hawaii with the world.

Duke’s magnetic personality, amazing athletic achievements, sparkling smile and muscular build made him an ideal person to share Hawaii with the world. He loved to play ukulele, sing, dance hula, surf, paddle, swim, and be with people. These were the things he loved and he shared them at home and wherever he traveled. “The impact of Duke as hero is further enhanced in that Duke’s fame brought attention to the small American territory of Hawaii in addition to the Hawaiian culture he represented.”<sup>49</sup> A present day example of a world identity is that of Japan and their own star athletes. Ichiro Suzuki plays baseball for the Seattle Mariners and is highly praised by his American and Japanese audiences. In an article about Ichiro as a cultural icon for Japan, the author wrote, “The excellent play of the Japanese baseball players and their positive personalities have changed the American image of Japanese.”<sup>50</sup> The amazing accomplishments, positive personality and charismatic being of Duke have helped to shape the worldview of Hawaii. Duke was Hawaii.

There is no way that Duke would be the name he is today without the help of the media. The world faced two world wars and a terrible depression during Duke’s years of fame. Reading about, seeing his image and watching movies that he was in, was an escape to Hawaii for the war torn countries of world. I use the term ‘world’ here, because Duke was written about in Europe,

## Who Claims Duke as their icon?





Africa, the United States, Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand. I am not aware of writings in other places, but I feel that this is a sufficient amount of countries to use 'world' to cover the bunch.

The media played a huge role in Duke's becoming an icon. Everywhere he went he was written about and photographed. Duke's years in Hollywood taught him the art of taking a photograph. He learned camera angles and lighting techniques.<sup>51</sup> It was "not only personality but physical appearance,"<sup>52</sup> that won Duke his fame. He stayed in top physical form and had that golden smile. An example today would be basketball star Michael Jordan, "Jordan's play on the court made him a star, but it's clear that his 'print work' - portraits and action shots- helped make him a cultural icon."<sup>53</sup>

Duke also possessed something else. He had a magic that drew people to him. Everyone who came to Hawaii wanted to meet Duke. Spark Matsunaga, a Representative of Hawaii for Congress, said, "He made you proud to even be just an acquaintance of his."<sup>54</sup> And when President Kennedy visited the Islands in 1962, a Los Angeles Times reporter wrote in his column, "Kennedy was passing curtly along the line of dreary politicians, when he suddenly came upon Duke. A big, broad grin spread over the Presidents features, and the two men...had a long and lively discussion of the crawl stroke and flutter-kick pioneered by Duke."<sup>55</sup> Duke's encounters and relationships with people already labeled as celebrity, star, famous and/or royalty, continued to solidified his status as icon.

In Name, Hero, Icon, the author, Anna Makolkin, spoke of the attraction of icons, "a nation needs a hero who can provide this sense of common property and a sign of collective identity."<sup>56</sup> Duke's magic attracted many groups of people, who all considered him common property and considered him to form the collective identity of Hawaii. In an essay written at

conference here in Hawaii, the author felt Duke carried “within him a certain inner magic... He is a native; this means he has within him ... the magic, childlike, dreamlike qualities of a man from a race still in the realm of childhood as far as progression of civilizations are concerned.”<sup>57</sup> This is an arguable statement on many levels, but it does point out his inner magic. Duke carried with him some kind of inner magic that served as a magnet to people. Is this because he was a *native*? Or because he was Duke who was also Hawaiian with no verbal explanations of what that meant. He showed us the meaning, of being Hawaiian, throughout his life.<sup>58</sup>

An article written in 1960, while Duke was on a goodwill tour in Hong Kong explained, “Fifty years as Hawaii’s official and unofficial Ambassador to the World rest lightly on the firm shoulders of Duke Paoa Kahanamoku... For Duke is Hawaii’s most famous Hawaiian, a fame that long ago resolved into the simple smile of a great man’s friendly attachment to his fellow man.”<sup>59</sup>

### **Challenged**

All icons must have at least one downfall during their lifetime. This confirms them as human and thus reaffirms to the general public their relatability. The ability to relate with the general public is a key trait, which starts with humble beginnings, begins to fade as hero status grows, but reappears again as the icon faces challenges. In the article, *Professional Athletes: Cultural Icons or Social Anomalies?*, the author explains, “the more successful they become, the greater the challenges they experience.”<sup>60</sup> Duke faced three major challenges in his life; illnesses, the idea he was too old to compete and the appearance of having money.

Duke faced serious illnesses throughout his life. The first, as previously mentioned, was in Washington D.C. with pneumonia. He recovered from that illness within a few months and

was soon training again. Many people did not know that he was sick. The next incident happened in 1955 and came as a shock to his fans. Duke suffered a heart attack and had to be rushed to the hospital. The general public did not know that he had sporadically had heart trouble following his years of competition. Almost ten years later, Duke was hit in the head by the boom of a catamaran with a huge amount of force and caused a blood clot on his brain. He had successful brain surgery, but this time he needed many weeks of recovery time and would never be able to fully recover. This happened in 1962, six years before he died of a heart attack at age 77. When someone asked Duke about getting back into the water after one of his hospital visits he said, “Who knows how many days I’ve got left? I say, don’t count your chickens, eat ‘em!”<sup>61</sup>

The suggestion that Duke was too old for competition first came up for the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp. He quickly proved them wrong by winning. Again in 1923, the public questioned Duke’s ability to keep up with the pack. The Daily Telegram reported that he simply, “smiled his golden smile when people suggest that he is through.”<sup>62</sup> Duke continued to prove his strength, all through his life, by frequently demonstrating his skills in numerous water sports.

Duke’s most difficult struggle was with finances. In Grady Timmons biography of Duke, Timmons wrote, “The world was ready for Duke’s arrival. But was Duke ready for the world? After the rush of Olympic fame had subsided, he discovered that he could not go back to the carefree existence of a Waikiki beachboy. Success demanded something more. He was forced to lead two lives: one in and one out of the water.”<sup>63</sup> This plagued Duke all his life and showed his vulnerable side. Even after getting the position as Sheriff of Honolulu, he still felt he could not live up to his reputation. When the position was abolished in 1961, Duke was 71 years old and out of a job. Different groups of people lobbied and won Duke the job as the official

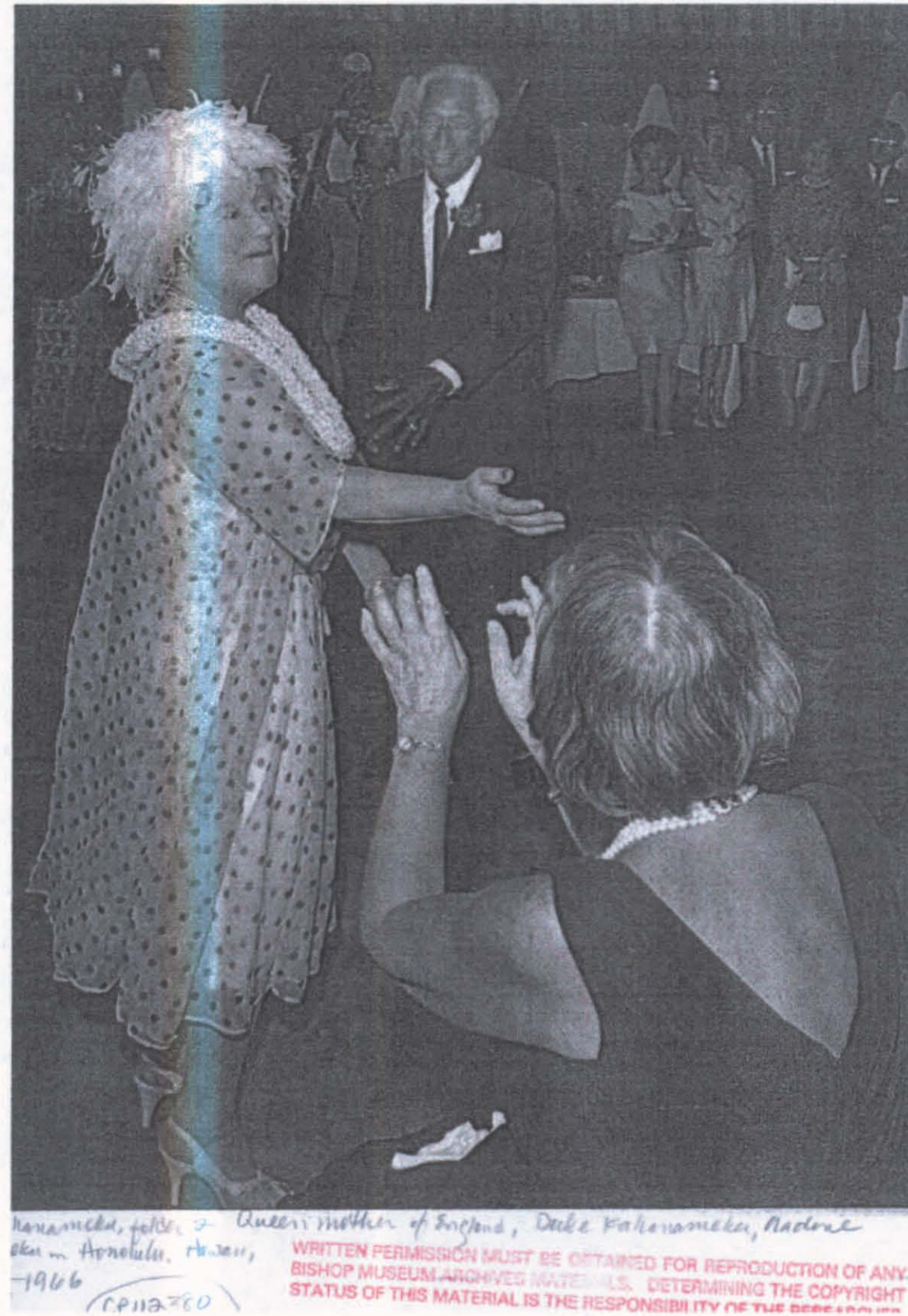
Ambassador of Aloha. The state paid him a small salary, but there was public outrage. The people of Hawaii had the mistaken impression that Duke was wealthy and didn't want to use taxes to pay him any more. This was a dark time for Duke. He felt betrayed and disgraced. Duke's good friend Author Godfrey tried to help by writing a scathing letter to the Star-Bulletin newspaper, they published some of the things he wrote, on August 6, 1961, "Entertainer Author Godfrey is 'really burned' up at Hawaii for the disgraceful treatment that Duke Kahanamoku is getting....Just think for all the honor Duke has brought here, he's got only a trunk full of medals. What good does that do him when he's hungry?"<sup>64</sup> This did not help. The people of Honolulu did not appreciate it and when Duke was printed as agreeing with him, they began to write in to the papers that he was greedy. This brought the champ to tears. Duke did not try to fight back; he felt it would be, "like telling people your honest."<sup>65</sup> He could not believe that the people of Hawaii would think that of him after all he had done to promote the state. One woman wrote in:

I am most upset over the remarks Duke Kahanamoku made. That man should be made to earn a living. My husband is a laborer and resents his bold remarks. I do, too. How can someone be so ungrateful? We are Hawaiian-born and he has really made us disgusted.

Duke went on with his life and the criticism did not last for long. Duke was/is common property of many groups of people, therefore, criticism is rarely voiced for fear of losing him to their specific group. He started the Duke Kahanamoku Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps Hawaii's youth and he became the front man of Duke's Restaurant, a place for Polynesian food, atmosphere and entertainment.



The restaurant and being the official greeter of Hawaii helped keep Duke afloat and very happy in the last years of his life. In an interview Duke commented, "All my life I have been going places to meet and greet people. Now, they'll be coming to me."<sup>66</sup>



*Duke and Nadine Kahanamoku teaching the Queen of England the hula.*

*Photo: Bishop Museum Archives*

### Life Beyond Death

"On January 22, 1968 the world would bid 'Aloha' to Hawaii's most famous citizen. He would be remembered as a great swimmer, surfer and all-around good guy. More than 20 years after his death memories of his achievements and affecting personable style still linger."<sup>67</sup>

The most crucial aspect of becoming a cultural icon is ‘staying power’. The test of time is the only judge that can prove without a doubt, a human’s influence on the world. In an article about Elvis Presley, *Long Live the King*, the author feels “the strongest evidence of the King’s capacity to outwit the Grim Reaper lies in Elvis’ art itself.”<sup>68</sup> Duke’s strongest evidence lies in all that carries his name today. What could cause him to fade as an icon? Will he be able to further stand the test of time? Does all this add up to Duke Kahanamoku being a true cultural icon?

A great legacy of Duke Kahanamoku was the gift of Hawaii, or knowledge of Hawaii, to the world. In Joseph Brennan’s biography of Duke he quotes a local paper, “For years the Duke has been a one-man tourist bureau and chamber of commerce.”<sup>69</sup> He was Hawaii and therefore, everywhere he went, people learned about the islands through him. In 1967, the Hawaii Visitor’s Bureau gave Duke a plaque, the presenter Bob Allen said, “We give you this plaque, because you made the HVB possible.”<sup>70</sup> Newspapers often reported on how happy people left the islands because they got to meet the ‘Duke’ and take their picture with him and his surfboard. Just before Duke’s death, he greeted the millionth visitor to Hawaii. The industry, at that time, was worth \$375 million a year to Hawaii.<sup>71</sup>

Duke’s world influence includes Freshwater Beach, Australia where he introduced the sport of surfing to the Australians for the first time. Sandra Hall, an Australian, and one of Duke’s biographers wrote, “Australia has a special place in its heart for Duke. His visit came just thirteen years after its states had federated into an uneasy alliance. He helped the nation forge its identity, largely based on sports and its relationship to the surrounding ocean.”<sup>72</sup>

Freshwater Beach has a commemorative park, a statue of Duke and the surfboard that he used to demonstrate with, on display. Other places in the world that you may find Duke include:



Biarritz, France where a yearly surf festival is held, Greenwich, Connecticut where he is an honorary citizen, Stockholm, Sweden where he participated in the Olympics and later received a key to the city, beaches of Los Angeles where he has different busts and plaques up and down the coast, New Jersey, New Zealand and the list goes on.

Duke and his wife, Nadine, were invited as honored guests to both the Olympic Games in Australia and later in Tokyo. After the later invitation, Duke told the press that, “you just don’t know what it means to be remembered.”<sup>73</sup> Throughout the biographies written about Duke, you will find that this meant the world to him and he often couldn’t put it into words. In Name, Hero, Icon, Anna Makolkin writes, “A name remembered is a comfort to a human being who has to face one’s own and everyone’s inevitable mortality.”<sup>74</sup> After Duke’s death, Nadine wanted to ensure Duke was remembered and worked tirelessly as Mrs. Kahanamoku for 30 years. She had a major role in keeping his memory alive and enjoyed attending events in his honor.<sup>75</sup>

Duke is remembered by a United States postal stamp, a statue in Waikiki, a restaurant that he started named Duke’s, the pool at the University of Hawaii that bears his name, a perpetual trophy at a polo tournament, a clothing brand, a surf board brand, a beach and many more places and things that are named after him. Duke can also be seen in more than 30 films and starred with some of Hollywood’s finest at the time. This is “a mute testimony to the world’s desire to see him in the water, on the water, and out of the water.”<sup>76</sup> A major event happens every year in Honolulu and I was privileged to participate and work on the organizing committee. That event is the Duke Hoolaulea and honors Duke on his birthday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. There is a lei draping ceremony, hula show, canoe rides, surf contest, talk story about Duke, a surf-polo tournament, a waterman’s challenge race and much more that is all packed in to about

5 days. People from all over come to participate and every year we have more and more visitors, that did not know Duke personally, but come to Honolulu for the Hoolaulea in his honor.

HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN / SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2001 **HAWAII A15**

## Waikiki festivities to honor Duke with surfing contest

Star Bulletin Staff

Legendary waterman Duke Paoa Kahanamoku will be honored on Aug. 20-24 with festivities that include a longboard competition and a block party in Waikiki.

A hoolaulea to celebrate Kahanamoku's life will include a longboard surfing meet, waterman sports events, a lei draping of Duke's statue and a Sunday brunch block party on Kalakaua Avenue. A traditional ceremony

to celebrate Duke's 114th birthday will be held on Aug. 24.


One of the main events of the hoolaulea is the Converse Hawaiian Open that offers \$26,000 in prize money. The competition, held by Longboard Magazine, is the third of four stages of the U.S. Professional Longboard Championships. A total of \$10,000 will go to the winner in each of the men's and women's divisions. A nose-riding competition will also be held where a \$6,000 monetary prize

will be split between the men's and women's divisions.

Kahanamoku, considered the father of international surfing, was the first person to be inducted in the swimming hall of fame and the surfing hall of fame. He participated in four summer Olympic games between 1912 and 1932.

Kahanamoku won three gold medals and two silver medals in swimming relays and a bronze medal in water polo. He died in 1968 at the age of 77.

**SCHEDULE OF FESTIVITIES HONORING DUKE KAHANAMOKU**



**AUG. 18**  
From 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.: The Converse Hawaiian Open-Preliminaries. For more information, call Paul Holmes at (949) 366-8282 or e-mail editor@longboardmagazine.com.  
8 p.m.: Old-Timers Beach Boy Celebration at Duke's Waikiki. Duke's friends and fellow beach boys will meet and "talk story" of Kahanamoku.

**AUG. 19**  
From 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.: The Converse Hawaiian Open-Finals.  
-> From 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.: Surf Polo at the Kapahulu Groin. Teams will compete in the Bud Light Surf Polo tournament at Waikiki Beach.  
From 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.: Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach.  
-> Lei will be made to drape Duke's statue.  
-> Duke's Olympic medals will be displayed at the Bishop Museum.  
-> The Hawaiian Longboard Federation will present a collection of historic reproduced Hawaiian longboards made by Pihaku.  
-> Sandra Hall will debut her new book called "Duke: A Great Hawaiian." She will hold presentations at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. A portion of the book's proceeds will go to the Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation.  
From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Sheraton Moana Surftrider:  
-> The public is invited to join in a community lei making that will be used to decorate Duke's statue.  
-> 10 a.m. Grady Timmons, historian and author of "Waikiki Beach Boys," will hold a slide presentation about the legendary surfer.  
-> Author Timothy DeLa Vega will hold a presentation highlighting the history of longboard surfing.

**AUG. 20**  
5 p.m. Lei draping of Duke's statue. A sidewalk surfboard procession of lei will make its way to the statue starting from the Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach at 4:30 p.m.

**AUG. 22**  
8:30 a.m.: Duke's Ocean Mile Swim. Swimmers will race along the Waikiki shoreline.  
From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Brunch on the Beach on Kalakaua Avenue. A block party featuring entertainment in honor of Duke.  
10 a.m.: Waterman Challenge. Teams that include lifeguards from Honolulu and Los Angeles will compete in swimming, paddle boarding and canoe racing in front of Waikiki Beach.  
Around noon: Lanikai Canoe Club's 37th annual Duke Kahanamoku Classic. Paddlers will race 24 miles from Kailua Beach Park to Duke Kahanamoku Beach in front of the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa. Paddlers should start arriving in Waikiki around noon.

**AUG. 23**  
Duke's memorabilia will be displayed at the Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach.

**AUG. 24**  
From 5:30 a.m. to 7 a.m.: Duke's 114th birthday anniversary. Sunrise birthday greeting at Duke's statue.  
-> Duke's friends and former co-paddlers will ride in a canoe and spread flowers in waters off Waikiki. His statue will be draped with lei.

Honolulu Star Bulletin article on Duke Ho'olaulea

Honolulu Star Bulletin August 2004

We, the general public, create icons. We decide who has achieved enough, inspired enough, encouraged enough etc. We also decide how long someone can retain icon status. The dangers of over-saturation are more present today, with all the media and ways of communicating, than ever before. The essay from the Heroes: East and West conference, points

this out, “the hero is in constant danger of losing his inner soul through engulfment by the profane material sphere.”<sup>77</sup> This did not happen while Duke was alive, but we could sell him out ourselves while, we think, we are trying to keep his name alive. Mickey Mouse, an icon of a different sort, has recently celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There has been a decline in revenues relating to Mickey in the last few years and the question of retiring him has come up. In an article in the New York Times, a financial analyst wonders, “Mickey hasn’t really changed, and I guess the question is, have the times passed him by?”<sup>78</sup> Later in the article, the author Laura M. Holson considers that, “Maybe, at age 75, the mouse simply cannot be all things to all masters.”<sup>79</sup>

Duke Kahanamoku was, at one time, all things to all masters. That identity will remain in museums, Halls of Fame and books. His true legacy, as a cultural icon, is one that is constantly being confirmed and cemented. I believe his legacy is that of an identity for Hawaii; an identity that now deals with exaggeration and over saturation, but Duke’s influence in Hawaii’s present popular identity is undeniable. I also believe his title, as ‘Father of Modern and International Surfing’ will continue to grow and influence present and future surfers around the world. These will be his legacy and will be what keeps him a cultural icon.





*Duke's Hoo'laulea Lei Draping Ceremony 2003*

*Photo: Katie Wright*

A tourist at a pay parking lot in Honolulu watched as Duke drove right by the parking attendants without having to pay. The tourist did not see who it was, but complained that they then had to pay for parking. The attendant summed up what Duke means to Hawaii in a few simple words, he replied to the tourist, "Eh Braddah, that's the only King we got!"<sup>80</sup>

Duke Kahanamoku was/is a cultural icon.



## **An Unintentional Legacy**

There is a store in Honolulu, located near the Honolulu Harbor, called Hilo Hattie. This store was started in 1963 and claims that it “is the largest retail source for Hawaiian and Island Lifestyle products.”<sup>81</sup>

My Mother was in town for a visit, and we decided to venture into the store to see what it was all about. As we entered the store a shell lei was dropped over our heads and paper cups of guava juice was put into our hands. We were then directed down a path-like aisle into a maze of brightly colored everything. The store carries anything and everything ‘Aloha’ (or what the store claims is ‘Aloha’) from flowered shirts to ukuleles to plastic hula dolls. We both felt a little nauseated at the full attack of bright lights, clothes and plastic (or perhaps it was from the sugary artificially flavored guava drink we were given). After we took a few steps we realized that there was no going back the way we came in; we had to complete the path around the ‘island’ of merchandise and then move through the cash registers in order to leave.

The store is trying to represent and sell what it thinks Hawaii is all about or, more accurately, I believe they would like to sell what the tourist feels Hawaii is all about. Regardless of that, these representations of Hawaii or Hawaiian lifestyle came from somewhere. They had a source. One of the sources of representations of Hawaii was Duke.



Konai Thaman wrote in a paper, called Decolonizing Pacific Studies, about interrogating representations of the Pacific Islands. She felt that they have been inherited or that we are creating them now.<sup>82</sup> This is true of the representations we see of Hawaii. In this portion of the paper, I would like to address the expansion of representations that Duke may have introduced to the world and why these things were so important at the time of introduction and today. What was and is going on in the world that we needed these representations of Hawaii?

During Duke's lifetime Hawaii's monarchy fell, Hawaii become a Territory of the United States, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, and Hawaii became a State in the United States in 1959. This was not a time of peace and harmony; yet when people speak of this time in Hawaii, it is always called the "Golden Years of Waikiki".<sup>83</sup> How could a time during such political unrest, poverty and war be considered so wonderful?

The community of Honolulu began raising funds and sending Duke to the continental United States in 1911 and continued to do so until his death in 1968. There was always talk of making a mark for Hawaii. Throughout Duke's life there was a pressure for him to make a mark for Hawaii on the world. It is here that we need to look for the purpose of Duke. It would be simple to say it was the businessmen of Oahu seeking out a grand advertisement to visit Hawaii or give Hawaii some respect on an international level and that does have something to do with it. But it was not that simple. People of all different groups looked up to and promoted Duke. What were they looking for? Perhaps, they were looking to forget about the troubles at home and dream with a star. Perhaps, the idea, of Duke, his achievements and world fame, were enough to help

people look up and feel encouraged. I have found the general Hawaiian community was grateful, excited and proud to have a man like Duke represent what it meant to be Hawaiian.<sup>84</sup>

As Duke traveled he took with him his Hawaiian upbringing. His mother spoke very little English and used the Hawaiian language with her children therefore Duke spoke fluent Hawaiian language, his parents also taught him hula, ukulele and to be kind to everyone you come across. He took his responsibility seriously, being the oldest, and was constantly worried about letting his family down. As Duke traveled around the world, funded by the Honolulu community, he carried these attributes. All the countries he visited saw the skills that Duke learned from his parents; and during his visits he was keen to share his knowledge. Thus creating representations of what being Hawaiian meant. I do not feel that Duke ever wanted being Hawaiian to be broken down into hula dancing dolls and plastic ukuleles, but this was the result by his death in 1968. The representations had begun to rapidly multiply and mutate into the stereotypes we face today.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Brennan p245

<sup>2</sup> [www.surfart.com/legends/duke\\_kahanamoku](http://www.surfart.com/legends/duke_kahanamoku)

<sup>3</sup> Brennan p243

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Kimo Hollinger

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Kimo Hollinger

<sup>6</sup> Hall p97

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- <sup>7</sup> <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/cultural%20icon>
- <sup>8</sup> [www.time.com/time/time100/index.html](http://www.time.com/time/time100/index.html)
- <sup>9</sup> Long Live the King, Time South Pacific, 8/12/2002 Issue 31, p64, 1p, 1c
- <sup>10</sup> Makolkin p. 109
- <sup>11</sup> Interview with Pamai Tenn
- <sup>12</sup> Interview with Sandra Hall
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with Pamai Tenn and Sandy Hall
- <sup>14</sup> Excerpt from the Duke Kahanamoku Family Book, given by Pamai Tenn
- <sup>15</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke
- <sup>16</sup> <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/aug11.html>
- <sup>17</sup> Kahanamoku & Brennan, 32
- <sup>18</sup> Kahanamoku & Brennan p32
- <sup>19</sup> Kahanamoku & Brennan p31
- <sup>20</sup> Interview with Sandy
- <sup>21</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke-Sigmund Freud quote
- <sup>22</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke
- <sup>23</sup> 'Kahanamoku Kick' is the flutter kick which Duke made popular.
- <sup>24</sup> <http://www.hawaiianswimboat.com/duke1.html>
- <sup>25</sup> Kahanamoku & Brennan p49
- <sup>26</sup> Kahanamoku & Brennan p49
- <sup>27</sup> International Olympic Committee website
- <sup>28</sup> Widely known about Duke, reiterated by my interviews with Sandy Hall and Pamai Tenn.
- <sup>29</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke
- <sup>30</sup> Brennan, p 56
- <sup>31</sup> Brennan, p259
- <sup>32</sup> [www.surfart.com/legends/duke-kahanamoku](http://www.surfart.com/legends/duke-kahanamoku)
- <sup>33</sup> Duke Kahanamoku, City and County Of Honolulu
- <sup>34</sup> Duke Kahanamoku, City and County of Honolulu
- <sup>35</sup> <http://www.hawaiianswimboat.com/duke3.html>
- <sup>36</sup> Brennan p.45
- <sup>37</sup> Brennan p34
- <sup>38</sup> <http://hawaiianswimboat.com/duke5.html>
- <sup>39</sup> <http://hawaiianswimboat.com/duke5.html>
- <sup>40</sup> Makolkin p. 13
- <sup>41</sup> <http://memory.loc.gov/ammen/today/aug11.html>
- <sup>42</sup> Kahanamoku & Brennan
- <sup>43</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke
- <sup>44</sup> Professional Athletes: Cultural Icons or Social Anomalies
- <sup>45</sup> Makolkin
- <sup>46</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke
- <sup>47</sup> Makolkin p89
- <sup>48</sup> Brennan
- <sup>49</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke
- <sup>50</sup> International Pastime, New York Times



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- <sup>51</sup> Interview with Sandy Hall  
<sup>52</sup> Metzger p9  
<sup>53</sup> Best of the 90's, Sports Illustrated; 4/26/04, Vol. 100, Issue17, p136, 8p, 10c,2bw  
<sup>54</sup> Hall p61  
<sup>55</sup> <http://www.hawaiianswimboat.com/duke8.html>  
<sup>56</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke  
<sup>57</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke  
<sup>58</sup> Informed by interview with Pamai Tenn  
<sup>59</sup> Paradise of the Pacific p11  
<sup>60</sup> Professional Athletes: Social Anomalies or Cultural Icons?, USA Today Magazine  
<sup>61</sup> Brennan p238  
<sup>62</sup> Daily Telegram, February 5, 1923, Honolulu City and County Website  
<sup>63</sup> [www.hawaiiswimboat.com/duke5.html](http://www.hawaiiswimboat.com/duke5.html)  
<sup>64</sup> Brennan p223, 224  
<sup>65</sup> Brennan p228  
<sup>66</sup> Brennan p231  
<sup>67</sup> Website of Honolulu City and County/Duke  
<sup>68</sup> Long Live the King, Time South Pacific, 8/12/2002 Issue 31, p64, 1p, 1c  
<sup>69</sup> Brennan p241  
<sup>70</sup> Hall p95  
<sup>71</sup> Hall p95  
<sup>72</sup> Hall p94  
<sup>73</sup> Brennan  
<sup>74</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke p14  
<sup>75</sup> Interview with Pamai Tenn  
<sup>76</sup> [www.surfart.com/legends/duke-kahanamoku](http://www.surfart.com/legends/duke-kahanamoku)  
<sup>77</sup> Denny, Sydow, Luke  
<sup>78</sup> No Golden Years Yet for a 75-year-old Mouse, New York Times; Vol. 153, Issue 52677, pC1, 2p, 2bw  
<sup>79</sup> No Golden Years Yet for a 75-year-old Mouse, New York Times; Vol. 153, Issue 52677, pC1, 2p, 2bw  
<sup>80</sup> Brennan p252  
<sup>81</sup> [www.hilohattie.com](http://www.hilohattie.com)  
<sup>82</sup> Konai Thaman, Decolonizing Pacific Island Studies  
<sup>83</sup> Film Waikiki by Edgy Lee  
<sup>84</sup> Information confirmed by several interviews by people of Hawaiian descent.

## **Back Story on the Author**

Why am I writing about Duke Kahanamoku? I moved to Hawaii about five years ago and began teaching and coaching swimming at Kamehameha Schools. I realized while working there that I did not know much about the Pacific and the people who make it up. Going back to school seemed like the appropriate thing for me to do in order to learn about the place I would now like to stay and make my home. Pacific Island Studies was my choice because I wanted to learn about Hawaii and all the other Pacific nations. I was passionate about this and thought I was prepared to start graduate school.

My Grandfather lived in Hawaii for about 5 years back in the 1940's. He was in graduate school at University of Hawaii and swam for the great Coach Sakamoto. He broke a world record in the War Memorial Natatorium down at Waikiki Beach and he lived in the Kalia area, about one street over from Duke's family. I never met my Grandfather because he died young, while my Father was still in college (swimming in college). But he passed on a love for Hawaii and huge admiration for a man named Duke Kahanamoku. That was then passed on to me from my Father. And here I am, following in my grandfather's footsteps by living in Hawaii, going to graduate school and studying about the man he so admired.

First though, before I began my study of Duke, I went through a painful journey of learning the history and the current events of the Pacific Island nations. I never realized what had gone on in the Pacific, such as the extent of colonization, and what turmoil exists today in the personal identity of some countries and the problems that go

with newly gained independence. I learned of pride, of hatred and mostly of human nature. I did not feel it would be appropriate for me to do a project about a people or a country of which I had just begun to understand. I came full circle when I chose to create a video and paper about Duke and his influence in the world. It was a topic I was familiar with from a young age and I now had Pacific Island Studies to help inform my work.

I live in multiple worlds and the sources I chose to quote in the paper on Duke reflect that. Several are from the academic world, but even more are from popular culture and personal interviews; which I feel is the heart and soul of how an icon is created. My classes at University of Hawaii, Manoa in the dark and treacherous looking Moore building influenced my study of Duke in every way. I did not write a single word without thinking of Katerina Teaiwa's discussion of body, Vilsoni Hereniko's talks of cultural identity, Terence Wesley-Smith's lectures on economics and politics, Rapata Wiri's study of Maori people and the Polynesian way, and David Hanlon's readings of the Pacific writers. The final world, which informed this project, the video and the paper, is the world that I live in everyday, the ocean and the people who survive by it. The surfers, the paddlers, the swimmers, and the ocean itself gave me the responsibility of getting it right. If no one besides my professors' ever read this that will be fine, but if it goes into my world somehow, I have a responsibility in writing about Duke that I take very seriously. I hope this paper took an honest view of Duke's life, and even more importantly, his legacy.

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