

FRED HEMMINGS

Living Legend of the Outrigger

By Barbara Del Piano

Outrigger's own Fred Hemmings, already the recipient of numerous national and international surfing awards, has been inducted into the newly established Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation Hawaii Waterman Hall of Fame. The Foundation's goal is to bring special recognition to Hawaii's exceptional kane and wahine o ke kai.

Along with his mentor and hero, Duke Kahanamoku, and seven other outstanding athletes who have excelled in ocean sports, the inductees were honored at a gala affair at the Club on August 24.

Fred's credentials in the world of athletics are simply mind-boggling. From the small kid struggling to catch a wave at Canoes in the 1950s, to his recent induction into the Hawaii Waterman Hall of Fame, his accomplishments in the world of sports are unsurpassed.

Fred grew up in Kaimuki. His New York born father and local mother were Outrigger members at the "old" club where Fred and his five siblings spent a good part of their childhood, learning to swim, surf, and paddle at an early age.

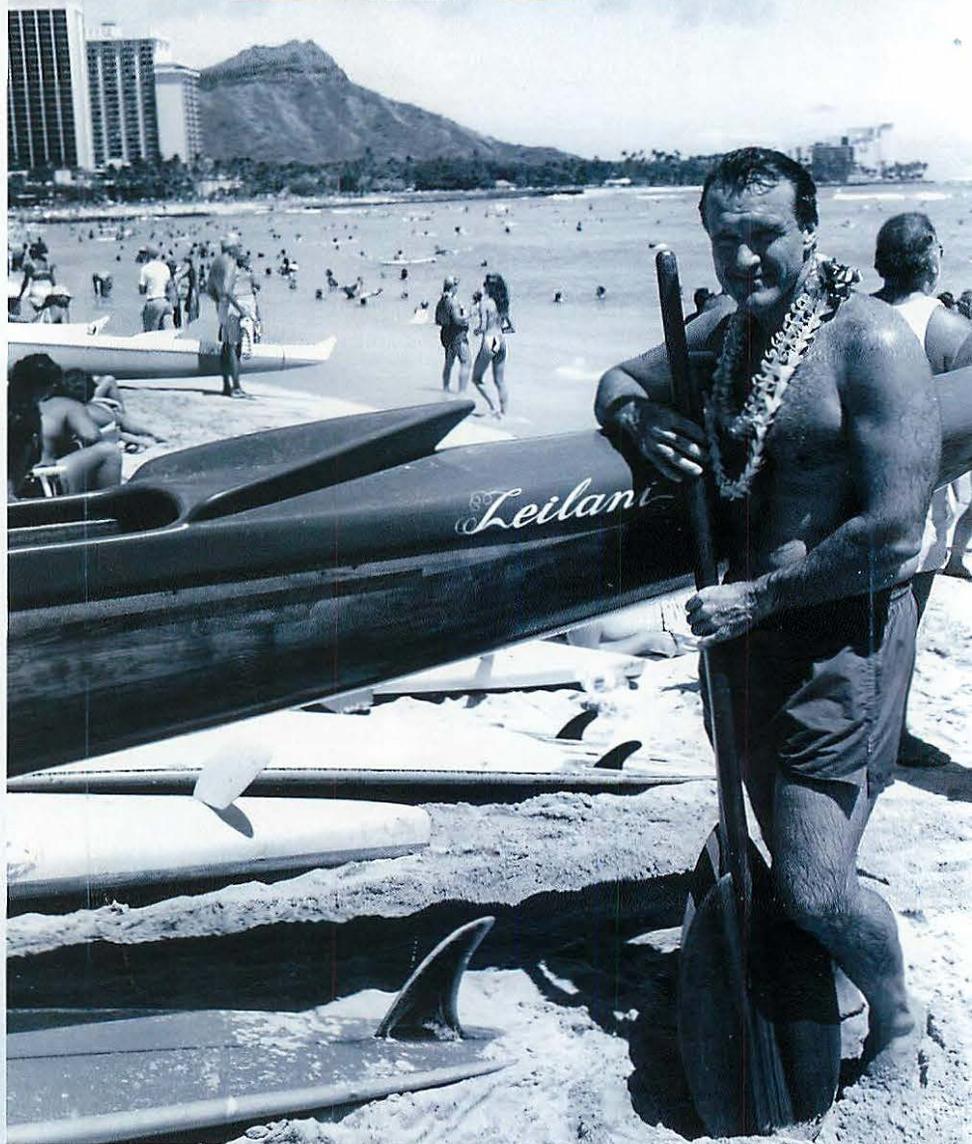
When the waves at Waikiki seemed too tame, the gutsy youngster bummed rides with other surfers to Makaha where the challenges were greater. In 1958, at the age of 12, Hemmings placed third in the junior division at the Makaha International Surfing Championships; he won that division in 1961 and 1963.

He made the national scene in 1964 when he won the Senior Men's Division at Makaha and was written up in *Sports Illustrated* and featured on nationally televised ABC's *Wild World of Sports*. He took the title again in 1966 and came in first in the Haleiwa Sea Spree in 1969.

Local laurels were not enough for this outstanding surfer. After his first 1964 victory at Makaha, Fred travelled to Lima, Peru, where he came in first in the Peruvian International Championships.

But the ultimate jewel in the crown of his surfing career was a spectacular victory at the World Surfing Championships at Rincon Bay in Puerto Rico in 1968. Competing against outstanding surfers from around the globe, not only did Fred capture the title, but was the first American ever to do so.

Hemmings involvement in water sports was not confined to surfing; he was an outstanding paddler and steersman, and a member of Outrigger's winning crew in



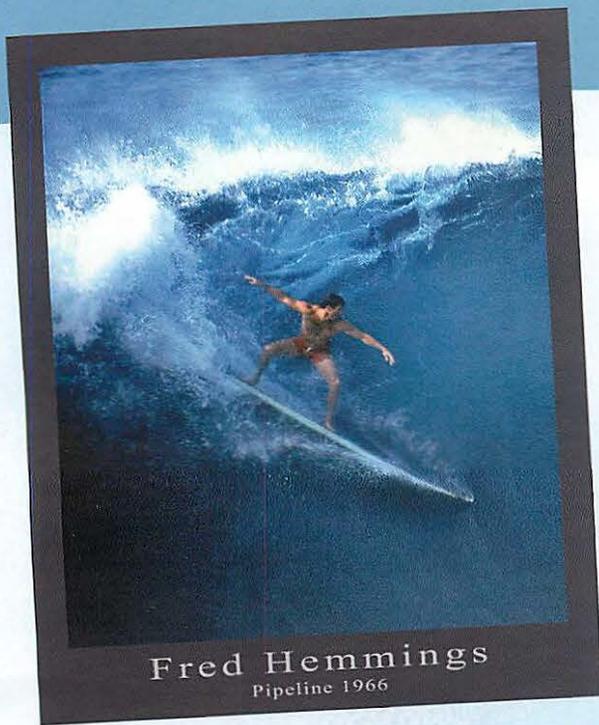
Fred has steered the most winning crews in the Macfarlane Regatta.

the challenging Molokai to Oahu long distance race in 1967 and 1968.

In 1975, up against a formidable team from Tahiti, Fred and his team-mates came from behind, not only winning a spectacular race, but setting a record as well. His crew broke the record again in 1984, when Fred steered his Masters crew to victory, coming in third overall.

As a steersman, Fred holds the record for the most recorded wins in a Macfarlane regatta, over the years steering 61 crews to victory. Paddlers who have crewed for Fred are unanimous in expressing their devotion and respect for him; they laud both his physical strength and strength of character, and attribute his positive attitude to many of their victories. Possessing an intuitive feeling for the ocean, Fred reacts spontaneously to unexpected challenges, which more often than not, turn likely defeats into unexpected triumphs.

Hemmings also served in the demanding role of Club



Fred and his surfing buddies, including Duke Kahanamoku admire fancy wheels during a Mainland surfing trip.

Captain in 1975. As part of a plan to augment the Club's water sports program, he was instrumental in reviving the Castle Swim, which had been discontinued in 1958. The swim, with a new route and new rules, is a popular Club event to this day.

After reaching the pinnacle of success, Fred retired from surfing competition in 1969, turning his sights to developing surfing into a professional sport. Over the next 20 years, he produced the Smirnoff World Pro-Am before founding the Pipeline Masters, the World Cup of Surfing, World Team Surfing, International Professional Surfing, and the Triple Crown of Surfing.

Hemmings, with Randy Rarich, founded the first world pro tour and was a pioneer in promoting women's surfing competition on the North Shore. The Honolulu Advertiser dubbed Hemmings "The Father of Professional Surfing." For many of the events he founded and produced, he served as co-anchor on national TV.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Fred was a national television commentator for surfing and canoe racing events for ABC Wide World of Sports, CBS Sports Spectacular, and NBC Sports World, and eventually hosted his own local radio show.

When former Outrigger member and promoter Kimo McVay, who at the time was Duke Kahanamoku's manager, formed Duke's Surf Team in 1965, Fred was one of four outstanding surfers who toured parts of the mainland with Duke, and served as Duke's personal assistant during the latter years of his life.

Along the way, Hemmings continued to amass additional honors and awards; in 1969 he was inducted into Outrigger's prestigious Winged "O" and received the Duke Kahanamoku Sportsman Award. The Association of Surfing Professionals honored him for Service to the Sport of Surfing in 1989. Perhaps the most prestigious award of all was his induction into the International Surfing Hall of

Fame in 1991. He and Duke are the only Hawaii surfers to be so honored.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Fred served as a director on several Boards, including the Outrigger Canoe Club, Hui Nalu, Association of Surfing Professionals, and United States Surfing Federation. In 1984 he was appointed to the Board of the Denver Broncos, a post he continues to hold.

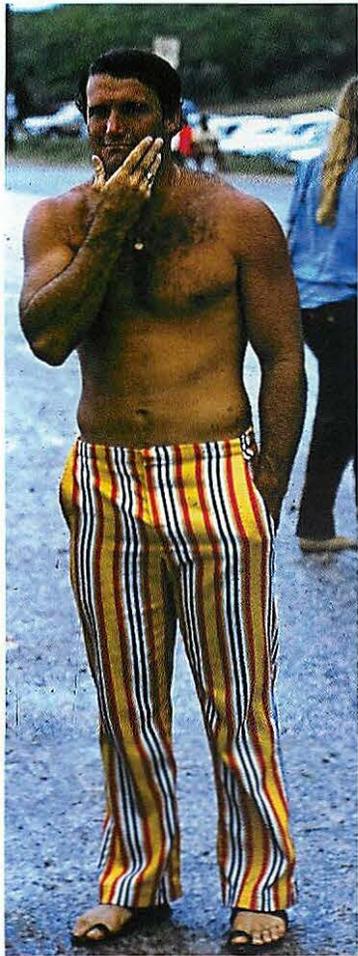
After such dazzling accomplishments, one would expect Fred to settle back and rest on his laurels. But wait—there's more. In 1984, the surfer turned solon was elected to the State House of Representatives. Fred likes to say he was cured of politics in the nineties, but in 2000 he moved up to the State Senate, where he served as Senate Republican Leader until 2006. For ten years, Small Business Hawaii ranked Fred as the state's Legislator of the Year. He retired from the Senate last month.

As a parting gift to the watermen of Hawaii, Hemmings introduced the Surfing Reserve Bill in the legislature which would recognize the note-worthiness of Waikiki and the North Shore as surfing areas. When the legislature failed to pass the bill on final vote, Governor Linda Lingle stepped in and made it happen, adding to the legacy Fred leaves behind him on the political scene.

Somewhere along the way, Fred found time to write. His first book, *Surfing, Hawaii's Gift to the World*, was published in 1977. *The Soul of Surfing is Hawaiian*, acclaimed 1999's Non-Fiction Best Seller in Hawaii, was published 20 years later. Hemmings has also been a contributing political editor for *Honolulu Magazine* and co-authored *Illustrated Surfing Encyclopedia* published in Japan in 1979.

First and foremost, Hemmings is a waterman, but his athletic endeavors were not confined to water sports. At Punahou, which he attended on scholarship, Fred excelled in football, playing both center and linebacker positions.

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Fred steers Johnny Mounts and Jimmy Austin through big surf at Old Man's.

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In 1961, with Fred as co-captain, Punahou won the Junior Varsity Interscholastic League of Honolulu championship; in the same capacity in 1964, he helped lead Punahou to the Varsity championship, earning a spot on the Star Bulletin's 1964 all-star team and was named Athlete of the Year by the Quarterback Club. Among many awards he received throughout his high school years, perhaps the most cherished of all were awards for Most Inspirational Player which he received in 1961 and 1964.

Running is also a sport Fred has participated in, finishing the Honolulu Marathon eight times, the Volcano Marathon twice, and the Edmonton Marathon in Canada. In the Hilo Marathon in 1983, he achieved his fastest time, completing the 26.2 miles in 3 hours, 13 minutes and 23 seconds. Until 1998, Hemmings was a regular participant on the Outrigger running team in the Hana Relays and other local events.

Not only has Fred made a name for himself in the sports world, excelling in all he has set out to do, but he has given back to athletics and the community, promoting both sports and individuals as well.

What's next for the surfer, paddler, steersman, runner, politician, and entrepreneur? Fred plans to spend more time with his family and also has registered with a speaker's bureau; he will be available to talk on his favorite subjects—Hawaiian history and water sports.



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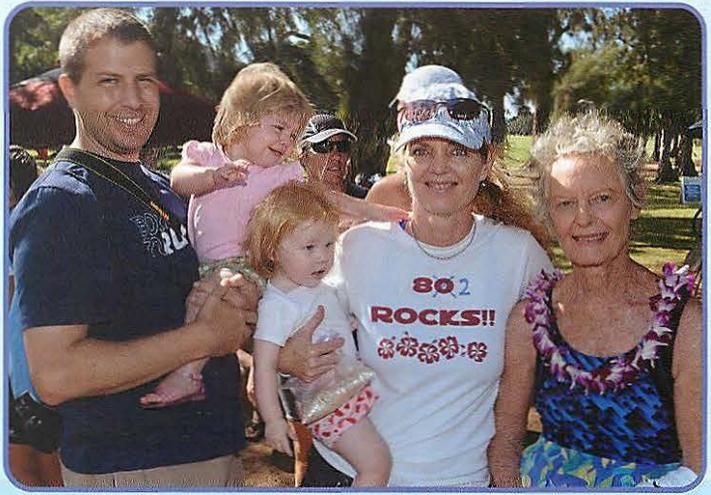
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As the Terrace Turns

Ambassador Girl Scouts, **Cristin Lim** and **Jelene Wong**, who are both seniors at Iolani School designed a walking tour brochure of Exceptional Trees for their Gold Award project. Many of the trees are located in Waikiki and in the vicinity of OCC. Copies of the brochure may be found at the Front Desk for members interested in taking a walking tour.

Contributions to this column are always welcome. Members may leave items at the Front Desk or email to occmag@aol.com. Items received by December 25 will appear in the February magazine. Items received after December 25 will appear in March. Be sure to include your name and phone number in case additional information is needed.



Jan "Tutu" Newhart, 82, gets a visit from her twin granddaughters Toni Miki and Tessa Kela, daughter Tracy and her husband Tom in time to see tutu Jan compete in the Na Wahine Triathlon which she finished in 2:07:37. A rough swim caused some competitors to be pulled from the water and a calf cramp slowed her down, but neither kept her from finishing.



Susan and James Caldwell attended their son Patrick Caldwell's wedding to Jennifer Jill Rody Richter on September 19, 2010 in Port Townsend, Washington. Patrick and JJ reside in Vista, California.



American Cancer Society community managers from around the Hawaiian Islands and Guam celebrated the start of their new business year on September 1, with a sunset champagne toast and delicious healthy meal at the Club. Mary Williamson (third from left) of Kauai hosted.

Mrs. Robert Sides and her son Robert Jr. vacationed recently in Athens, Greece.



Lani Hearn, Bob and Judy Maguire enjoyed a European vacation visiting Russia where they viewed the Kremlin, Red Square and other notable Moscow sights, and then took a river boat cruise from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Before getting to Russia, Bob and Judy spent four days in Brussels, and post-Russia stopped in New York City.



Dede Guss hosted friends with October birthdays at the Club. Sitting: Mandy Sutton, Denise Schnitzer and Linda Tanaka. Standing: Dede, Phyllis Kam-Young, Janette and Gina Loose, Raccine Singer, Gwen Omori, Jill Wheatman and Leslie O'Boyle.