

What Is Life Membership in the OCC

By Barbara Del Piano

This year, three members of the Outrigger Canoe Club were awarded the Club's highest tribute...that of Life Membership. At the Annual Meeting on February 29, the membership voted to induct Wendell Brooks Jr., Hal Henderson and Gerri Pedesky into that special group of members who have achieved the ultimate membership status the Club has to offer. It was a fitting reward for exceptional service; between them, the three individuals have devoted more than 125 years of service to the Club.

Life membership is not the same in all organizations. Some simply do not have the category: with others, it's a regular type of membership which can be acquired for big bucks.

Others award the honor based not only on service to the organization, but contributions to the community as well, and some bestow the honor on those who have achieved exceptional recognition in the sport which is the Club's primary activity. Another requires a minimum membership period and permits only a certain number of Life Members at one time.

The Outrigger Canoe Club appears unique in its designated requirements. Since 1971, according to the Bylaws, Life Membership is awarded for extraordinary service over the lifetime of his or her membership, or to someone who has brought great honor or prestige to the Club. The major benefit of this status, in addition to the great honor, is that there are no dues or minimum spending charge.

Throughout the years, criteria for Life Membership has changed. Although honorary memberships had been awarded prior to 1939, they were not specifically written into the Bylaws. However, a precedent had been set that provided for two special categories: Honorary and Life members.

These special designations could be bestowed by the Board of Directors, with the number limited to five. Honorary memberships were for one year only, but could be renewed by the Board on an annual basis. Life memberships were limited to those who already had been granted them.

Prior to specifically establishing Honorary and Life memberships, most of the honorees were Olympic champions. After serving as Territorial Governor, Wallace Rider Farrington, also a President of Outrigger's Board, was awarded the honor.

In 1964, an amendment to the Bylaws combined Honorary and Life memberships, thus eliminating the status of Honorary Member. Among those affected by this change was Duke Kah-anamoku who not only became a Life Member but maintained a seat on the Board of Directors for the rest of his life.

The most recent Bylaw changes affecting Life Membership occurred in 1971 when more specific rules were established. At that time, the Bylaws were amended to read that "Life members shall consist of regular members recommended by the Board of Directors and approved by the membership at a general membership meeting."

Later, at the Board's request, the Historical Committee was asked to make recommendations and in 1995, Ernest H. "Tommy" Thomas laid down more detailed requirements. As Chairman of the Life Member sub-committee of the Historical Committee, Tommy set the minimum age for recommendation at 80 years. He also arranged for an annual report listing all eligible members, a process continued to this day.

The reports are based on age, and show members years of service and contributions to the Club. Members and chairs of



Hal Henderson, Gerri Pedesky and Wendell Brooks were elected to Life Membership

various committees, terms and offices held on the Boards are all listed. Some years there is one recommendation; other years there is none. This year, as previously mentioned, there were three. There is neither a required minimum nor a maximum number for any given year.

After a nomination by the Historical Committee, the next step is approval by the Board of Directors. When that hurdle is passed, the name or names are presented at the Annual Meeting for approval by the general membership. However, the Board is entitled to make its own recommendations although it usually defers to the Historical Committee.

Prior to 1939 there were 14 Honorary and Life members including the Club's founder, Alexander Hume Ford, outstanding coach and mentor Dad Center, Olympic swimmer, Buster Crabb and four women, mostly champion swimmers.

Presently, 20 past presidents are among the recipients. The only Life Membership passed on to a spouse was to Nadine Kah-anamoku, Duke's widow. To date, ninety-one members have been selected.

Others who have received the honor have contributed in a variety of ways, over a long period of time, and their contributions have made the Outrigger a better place. Certainly Life Membership is an honor, but each recipient is truly deserving, having given back to the organization immeasurable time and effort.

Who Knew?

By Barbara Del Piano

Paul Arthur Dolan an Autobiography

"During the summers of 1956 and 1957, I was a beach boy with the Outrigger Beach Services, giving surfing lessons and canoe rides. Louis "Sally" Hale was the manager of the Service. I would solicit surfing lessons on the beach in the afternoon for lessons the next morning. In the afternoons, as canoe captain, I would comb the beach for interested tourists to ride canoe in the surf."

(Paul Dolan was a life member who passed away in 2012)