

# Life Member: Ah Buck

By Bill Danford

"I swam in the first Castle Swim in 1916. I remember a soldier won it, something Walker and Duke Kahanamoku came second. I didn't finish the race that year but I remember it well.

"The waves used to break out in what we called 'Steamer Lane' blue water. There was this one lifeguard who spent the whole night on his board because he couldn't get in, the surf was so big.

"Waikiki wasn't much quieter in the old days. Now it's too crowded and way too much noise.

"We didn't have a masters canoe crew but the Hau Tree gang used to paddle every year in the old timers race at Waikiki."

These are some of the memories of Ah Kin Yee, better known to us at Outrigger as Ah Buck. The Board of Directors named Ah Buck as a Life Member of the Club at the annual meeting on February 23.

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii on April 29, 1900, the turn of the century and the beginning of a new era in Hawaii and the United States.

His parents were emigrants from Canton, China in search of a new beginning and a place where a family could flourish in a healthy environment.

Ah Buck graduated from McKinley High School and continued his education for two more years at the College of Hawaii (UH Manoa).

During school years, he joined the Healani Swim Club and competed for them until joining the newly formed Hui Nalu Swim Club.

He loved the carefree atmosphere of Honolulu but in 1919 he left for Detroit, Michigan to work in the Ford Motor Plant. Returning home in 1927 he joined the newly formed Prohibition Department as an agent or in those days a "Pro High."

After a short leave of absence to work with the Corps of Engineers, Ah Buck rejoined the now known Treasury Department as an agent in charge of dismantling illegal stills manufacturing illegal liquor.

In 1950 he was transferred to the Drug Enforcement Division. Ah Buck remembers the concern about drugs



being imported into the islands and being distributed by transients on Smith Street.

The Treasury Department wanted to transfer him to Oregon in 1960 but instead he chose to retire to his beloved carefree life and Waikiki.

So many years spent on Waikiki Beach at the Hau Tree next to the

Outrigger Canoe Club. After work and weekends, Ah Buck and his many friends would surf, sun, fish and just watch the mainland haoles. Many of their hours were spent helping the younger kids like myself to understand the ocean that surrounded us all.

Many of us who grew up at the old Outrigger Canoe Club remember Ah Buck as an individual we respected and looked up to as a truly knowledgeable adult willing to help us if we were truly interested.

Nearly every kid in the club has had a "bust up" surfboard repaired by Ah Buck at some time or other.

Today Ah Buck still swims to the wind sock and helps us in the parking area. I don't think I have ever really seen him not doing something for someone else. We should all be proud to have such a remarkable individual as a lifetime member. ☺

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