



# Reynolds Burkland Elected to Life Membership

By Marilyn Kali

Reynolds Burkland celebrated his 70th year of membership in the Outrigger Canoe Club by being elected to Life Membership by fellow Club members at the Annual Meeting in February.

"I am very honored to have been selected," Reynolds said.

Reynolds has been an active member of the Club since joining in 1924 at the age of 13. He is one of a group of young boys that Alexander Hume Ford, founder of the Outrigger Canoe Club, took under his wing. As a result, Reynolds developed a life-long love and interest in water sports.

In 1961, Reynolds was elected to the Board of Directors and served as a member of the Historical Committee for many years before becoming the chairman in 1986 and continuing through 1988.

After retiring from a long career with Castle and Cooke, Alexander and Baldwin and Hawaiian Trust, Reynolds became a regular volunteer at Bishop Museum in 1976. There he acquired a great deal of professional experience and expertise which he brought to the Historical Committee.

He worked tirelessly to bring the Committee to a much higher level of operation and performance than had previously existed by instituting new methods of indexing, cataloging and labeling all archival collections and updating and improving the operation of the Oral History program as well. The systems which he put into effect have been praised by each succeeding chairman and the committee persons who work with these materials, year after year.

Ken Pratt of the Historical Committee interviewed Reynolds for an Oral History in 1987. Some of the excerpts of the oral history follow.

## The Club

My first experience with the Outrigger would have been in 1921-1922 or so when

I was invited to the Club as a guest of neighbors of ours up in Manoa. In those days the women and the young children used a bathhouse which was on the town side of the Club property.

As I remember, it was a long building with shower stalls at one end and then dressing cubicles on either side of an aisle down the center of the building.

## "Pop" Ford

In those days, my picture of "Pop" was generally of him riding in his old Model T Ford with a bunch of kids in the car. It was through him that I saw many parts of Hawaii that I probably would not have seen for many years after that. I remember that he took us one day out to Hanauma Bay. Now that doesn't seem like much of a trip today, but in those days there was just a dirt road from about where the Kahala Shopping Mall is now all the way out past Wailupe and Niu and Kuliouou and when you got out to the Kuapa Pond area the road went across the sand dunes there on just two wooden planks. You had to stay on those planks because if you got off them the sand was deep and soft and you really could have trouble getting out of that stuff.

In 1924, my brother Albert and I worked for Pop. He had organized a food conservation conference which brought people from all the countries around the Pacific and during that conference Albert and I were hired as messengers.



The OCC crew returns to Oahu on the USS Itasca from their victory at the 1933 Kealakekua canoe races. From left, Jack Fraser, Dick Burkland, Reynolds Burkland, Dick Bechert, Herbie Jordan and Campbell Stevenson.



Reynolds Burkland

After working that summer, I had a little money so I joined

the Outrigger Canoe Club in 1924 at Pop's urging. He wanted everybody to belong to the Club, and since I was 13 I was able to join as a junior member. I could get a locker in the area of the men's locker room which was pretty important because then I could leave my bathing suit and leave my towels there, and that made me feel like a full-fledged member of the Club.

I've lived here all my life and I've paid my dues every month since 1924, except for a couple of years during the War when I was away in the Navy.

## Surfing Accident

In 1925, my brother Albert had a really bad surfing accident. Albert was on a wave sliding left and somebody came at him, sliding right. The waves were pretty big and to keep from pearl diving, Albert tried to straighten out and slipped to the back of the board to try to keep the nose up. But the wave broke and the board hit the bottom and either the wave broke on him, driving him down on the board, or the board jumped back and hit him in the abdomen, giving him a severe blow.

Fortunately, there were friends of his there who saw he was in trouble and got his board for him and helped him get to the Club. When he got ashore, he was really almost paralyzed. So I called my father and asked him to come down and pick him up, which he did.

He took Albert to see Dr. James Judd who immediately put him in Queen's Hospital and started watching him. He didn't know what had happened to him, but after a day Albert started running a temperature so they opened

up his abdomen and found a very unusual sort of thing had happened.

Apparently the intestine had been pushed back against the backbone so hard that it had perforated. The intestine had been draining into the body cavity since the accident and peritonitis had set in. I suppose today with the antibiotics we have and other medicines, he could have recovered from that. But in those days we didn't have those medicines and I think he lived just three days.

When Albert was killed surfing, this was quite a blow to Pops. After all, he had been the one who had promoted surfing and fathered the Club for that purpose, and then wanted everyone to surf and here one of his favorites had been killed in what was probably the first surfing accident to be recorded.

After it happened, he went to the Outrigger directors and suggested that they create an honorary membership in honor of Albert, and recommended that they give it to my brother Dick, which they did.

### **Surfing**

Shortly after I became a member, my friend Bob Peterson gave me an old surfboard. It was pretty beat up, it had pearl dived a number of times so the nose was splintered and the varnish was mostly gone. But it was a great board to learn on, and as I remember we small kids all learned to surf in an area that was just on the Diamond Head side of a groin that went out from the beach into the water.

Waves used to break in that area and we small kids could first start catching waves by pushing off on the board and then later on learning to paddle and catch the waves by paddling. We didn't go near Canoe Surf for a long time. I can remember paddling and paddling and never catching a wave. We particularly tried to keep away from the beach boys. They didn't want us small kids in their way when they were surfing, especially when they had tourists out there surfing tandem with them.

Then we went to Canoe Surf, Cunha's and Public Baths, but never to Castle's or Zero Break which was way out.

### **Surfboard Water Polo**

I don't know how it got started except that it was begun as a tourist attraction, I think by the Royal Hawaiian. The teams were made up of beachboys and Outrigger members. I remember George Perry used to be the goaltender for the Outrigger. I played in a lot of those games—the ones that were Hui Nalu against the Outrigger Canoe Club, and Duke played with his brothers Sam and Louis.

Sam pulled a fast one once in one of the meets. He sharpened the rear end of the board so he had two front ends and he would swivel on his stomach if he wanted to change directions.

It was played just like regular water polo as I remember with a fairly soft ball that you could hold and throw easily.

They used to get good crowds.

### **Bathing Suits**

Probably most people today don't realize that in those early days the men all wore full bathing suits, top and bottom with a little skirt around the bottom. It was the standard bathing suit. And then, along in the late twenties, the two piece bathing suit became popular. They were first made by Mainland outfits like Jantzen and they all had belts around the top of the trunk part of them and the belts had very fancy buckles.

They weren't any good at all for Waikiki because the buckles would dig in to the surfboard, gouge out the wood and take the varnish off. I've always credited Duke Kahanamoku as being the solver of that problem because the first time I remember seeing a pair of new style trunks he was wearing them.

These trunks were made with buttons up the front with a fly to cover the buttons and then a long tongue from the top that went around to the right hip and buttoned over there, so that when you lay on a surfboard there were no buttons or

anything except the cloth between you and the board so the board wasn't damaged.

As I say, Duke was the first one I remember seeing wearing those trunks, but they became the thing to wear after that. The ones we got were all from Linn's Army and Navy store down on Iwilei Road.

In those days you had to wear a full bathing suit. As a matter of fact, you weren't supposed to walk on the

street in a bathing suit. There was an ordinance called the Desha Law that required that you be covered when you were on the street.

And the Outrigger had a rule that you had to have a top. You couldn't go in wearing just trunks. We used to beat that sometimes. If we were going body surfing out at Canoe Surf, we'd swim out to the end of the Moana pier, take our shirts off, hang them

on the stringers that were underneath the pier and then swim out to body surf. Then swim back and pick up our shirts on the way back to the beach and put them on before we got out of the water.

### **Kealakekua Canoe Races**

I was one of the very large group of boys and young men who turned out when the Club called for paddling volunteers. There hadn't been any canoe races for a good many years up to that time. There had been a few races back in the 1919s and 1920s when the Outrigger crew paddled against the Hui Nalu crew but then they abandoned paddling races and although Regatta Day was a Territorial holiday and a big event, the races were all sliding seat barges, boats like the shells the colleges row in, although these were wider because we had to make a turn.

There was not a long enough area here where you would have a straight away race, so they would paddle

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Reynolds, right, and his brother Albert in 1925.